

The housing experience of Hispanic immigrants:  
The case of Finney, Kansas

by

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B.S., Wichita State University, 2008

M.S., Wichita State University, 2011

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

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Department of Environmental Design and Planning  
College of Architecture, Planning and Design

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Manhattan, Kansas

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## **Abstract**

Some parts of rural America are experiencing unprecedented demographic and cultural changes as immigrant settlement patterns shift from traditional gateway cities to rural regions that have enticing economic opportunities. In particular, southwest Kansas has become a magnet for immigrant workers and their families. Between 2007 and 2008, Finney County became a majority-minority county (Callebs, 2009). However, lack of affordable housing and limited housing stock has strained communities and become an obstacle for newly settling immigrants (Stull, 2011). This study aims to redress the limited research on immigrants in rural regions and focuses specifically on the cultural experiences of Finney County Hispanic immigrants regarding integration into the local housing community.

This qualitative case study is designed using the housing career framework (Murdie, 2002) to capture the factors that influence the housing experience of Hispanic immigrants. The 25 participants were recruited using snowball sampling and convenience sampling techniques. Based on the participant's language preference, the in-depth interviews were conducted in English or Spanish. This study has found that the mission of community planning has to be a multifaceted process to address the varied needs of immigrant families. Community planners and policy makers can use the information this study provides to better serve the immigrant Hispanic community, which is expected to grow over the coming years.

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## Table of Contents

List of Figures .....	ix
List of Tables .....	x
Acknowledgements .....	xi
Dedication .....	xii
Chapter 1 - Introduction .....	1
Statement of the Problem .....	2
Purpose of the Study .....	4
Significance of the Study .....	5
Chapter Summary .....	7
Chapter 2 - Literature Review .....	8
Migration Shift .....	8
Impact of Globalization .....	9
Retooling Rural America .....	11
Retool with Immigrants? .....	13
Hispanics .....	16
Kansas: Diversity .....	18
Immigrants in Finney County .....	18
Housing Career .....	23
Housing Life-cycle .....	24
Cultural Factors .....	26
Household Characteristics, Preferences, and Resources .....	28
Filters in the Housing Search Process .....	32
Housing Search Process .....	34
Outcome of the Housing Search Process .....	35
Chapter Summary .....	35
Chapter 3 – Methodology .....	36
Research Approach .....	36
Purpose of the Study .....	38
Research Questions .....	38
Study Target Area .....	38

Study Participant.....	40
Individual Hispanic participants .....	41
Membership Role.....	43
Data Collection: Interviews .....	44
Data Management .....	48
Data Analysis .....	48
Reciprocity and Ethics .....	51
Trustworthiness and Rigor.....	52
Chapter Summary .....	53
Chapter 4 – Findings.....	54
Household Characteristics, Preferences, and Resources.....	54
Filters in the Housing Search Process.....	61
Housing Search Process .....	62
Outcome of the housing search process.....	63
Data Analysis Strategy.....	64
Research Question No.1: .....	68
Research Question No.2: .....	73
Research Question No. 3: .....	76
Presenting Themes.....	87
Theme 1: Strong dependence on social networks.....	87
Theme 2: Efforts to protect the undocumented immigrants .....	88
Theme 3: Fear of living next to Somalian immigrants. ....	89
Theme 4: The perils of lack of information .....	90
Chapter Summary .....	91
Chapter 5 – Discussion, Implication for Practice, & Future Research .....	92
Study Limitations.....	93
Discussion of Findings.....	93
Culture, Family, and Social Networks .....	94
Language Barriers .....	95
Poverty and Poor Education.....	95
Lack of Information .....	96

Housing Affordability .....	96
Housing Shortage and Housing Search Process .....	97
Discrimination.....	97
Undocumented Immigrants.....	98
Living in a Trailer .....	99
Implications for Practice .....	100
Future Research .....	102
Conclusion .....	104
References .....	105
Appendix A- Phone/E-mail Solicitation .....	125
Appendix B- Consent Form .....	126
Appendix C- Subjectivity Statement .....	128
Appendix D- Code Definition.....	129



## **List of Figures**

Figure 1. Percentage of Finney County Students Approved for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch...	20
Figure 2. 1992-1993 Finney County Headcount Enrollment Percentage by Race .....	22
Figure 3. 2016-2017 Finney County Headcount Enrollment Percentage by Race .....	23
Figure 4. Housing Career Model. ....	27
Figure 5. Map of Kansas identifying location of Finney County, Kansas.....	39
Figure 6. Map of Finney County, KS identifying the location of Garden City and Holcomb .....	39
Figure 7. Thematic Analysis Process, Braun & Clarke (2006).....	49
Figure 8. Map of Central America and Caribbean Islands .....	56
Figure 9. Map of Mexico .....	57
Figure 10. Pattern Codes: Networks and Mobility .....	65
Figure 11. Pattern Codes: Needs and Constraints.....	66
Figure 12. Pattern Codes: Culture and Safety.....	66
Figure 13. Pattern Codes: Privilege and Protection .....	67
Figure 14. Pattern Codes: Dissatisfaction and Satisfaction .....	67
Figure 15. Pattern Codes: Perceptions and Migration .....	68

## **List of Tables**

Table 1. Finney County Head Count Showing Free Lunch, Reduced-Price Lunch and Adjusted Education .....	21
Table 2. Year Totals Finney County Headcount Enrollment by Year, Race, and Gender. ....	22
Table 3. Demographic Characteristics .....	55
Table 4. Housing History .....	59
Table 5. Housing Characteristics .....	61

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## **Dedication**

Āmilakē, āmeseginalehu!

## **Chapter 1 - Introduction**

The importance of rural America cannot be overstated; it covers 75 percent of the land area and incorporates 17 percent of the U.S. population (Carr, 2009). In fact, small towns have been a quintessential component of the American story, possessing a symbolic significance that is embedded in the nation's history. However, researchers see clearly that the future of rural America is changing: For example, studies are documenting the shifting patterns of immigrant settlement from gateway cities to regions with little history of previous immigration (Singer, 2004; Jenson, 2006; Myers & Gearin 2001). Specifically, between 1990 and 2000, the immigrant population showed a 76% increase in non-metro counties than in metro counties, which showed a 58% growth (McGaha & Kudlowitz, 2007). In particular, non-metro counties in southwest Kansas such as Finney, Ford, and Seward have been experiencing a significant increase in diverse immigrant populations (The U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Between 2007 and 2008, Finney County, Kansas became one of six counties in the nation that had become a majority-minority county where the ethnic minority increases to make up the larger majority of the population (Callebs, 2009).

In part, this is because the local expansion of meatpacking has revived southwest Kansas; thus, increasing economic opportunities have been a magnet for immigrant workers and their families (Broadway & Stull, 2006). However, as the demographics of some parts of rural America are rapidly changing, there is growing recognition as to the importance of the housing experience for immigrants and their integration into rural communities. Specifically, in Finney County, the shortage of quality affordable housing has been a critical issue for over 30 years, notably becoming a major obstacle for newly settling immigrants (Stull, 2011). Additionally, the

influx of immigrants has put various strains on the community, and navigating the uncharted territory has been difficult.

However, at the city level, Garden City has been positive about how to choose to embrace its likely diverse cultural future (“Garden City,” 2015), a commendable effort that should not go unnoticed. In 2011, Garden City, KS, the county seat of Finney County, which has about 72% of the county’s residents by 2010 (The U.S. Census Bureau, 2010), went through a rebranding process where city officials adopted a new and inclusive motto: “The World Grows Here.” A yucca plant was chosen to be the symbol of the city; the multi-colored leaves with different sizes represented the racial and ethnic diversity of the city, the leaves systematically placed to overlap to symbolize the need for communities to build upon each other and demonstrate unity (“Garden City,” 2015). Collectively, the community has chosen to take a symbolic step of unity. In that spirit of camaraderie, the issue of lack of access to adequate and affordable housing for immigrants and family needs to be addressed.

### **Statement of the Problem**

To begin, very few rental units have been built over the years; therefore, mobile home parks and run-down motels on the borders of the city become a viable option for immigrants who lack the financial resources or connections to be able to settle in a more desirable living space (Stull, 2011). Consequently, local agencies such as The Catholic Agency for Migration and Refugee Services have galvanized over the years to help immigrants they have witnessed sleeping in riverbeds and roadside shelters (Lowe, 2013). Moreover, while some newly arriving immigrants with established connections have the option to stay with friends and relatives, they do so mostly in crowded conditions with landlords accustomed to renting by the head (Stull, 2011). Compounding the problem, each month approximately 300 occupied housing units are not

hooked up to any utilities, due to financial strains on the household. Clearly, 35 years after the first influx of immigrants to Finney County, affordable quality housing remains a pertinent issue (Lowe, 2013; Stull, 2011).

Nevertheless, some efforts have been made to improve the housing shortage. For instance, the Kansas Housing Resources Corporation each year provides \$2 million in grant money to assist towns in Kansas in building moderate-income housing. Although many developers in Finney County go after the same grant, it's unlikely all would receive the financial subsidy they would need to build more housing (Cobb, 2014). Some community members argue the state needs to provide more opportunities to support building more moderate income housing, currently a significant need in Finney County. However, with the state facing significant budget constraints, providing such opportunities would be a major challenge (Hunter, 2016).

Over the years, the sentiments have been to provide more jobs to reverse the depopulation of rural counties; however, in Garden City, KS, finding a job has not been the primary issue as businesses have been thriving. There are new restaurants, retail, and industry additions currently in progress or already newly established (Brewer, 2015). However, more opportunities for higher paying jobs are still needed; the Finney County poverty rate according to the 2011-2015 American Community Survey (ACS) was 17%, while the unemployment rate in the county according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics as of December of 2016 was 2.9%, arguably a positive economic indicator. However, even jobs exist, the prospect of poverty is not alleviated by this economic indicator; thus, being able to afford housing is still a challenge for many immigrants.

Moreover, with business booming in Garden City, KS, the population is expected to rise in the coming years, attracting more workers to the region where they also would need housing,

putting a burden on an already stressed housing market. Clearly, the housing shortage is an ongoing issue; the city states the market demand calls for 60 to 70 additional units per year, and in the past few years, the registered peak was at 20 homes (Brewer, 2015). Nonetheless, there are other efforts to provide incentives for developers. For example, the Rural Housing Incentive District Program (RHID) aids developers with their financing, but has strict guidelines on how developers can allocate RHID incentives. Consequently, RHID has produced results for Garden City recently, but the significant housing shortage remains (Haflich, 2015). At times, housing development there has been slowed down due to lack of subcontractors (Brewer, 2015). Even though some strides are being made, a more aggressive approach is necessary to solve the housing shortage (Haflich, 2015; Brewer, 2015; Cobb, 2014). Ultimately, navigating the landscape of a housing market that is experiencing a significant housing shortage could be a difficult task for a newly arriving family. This study will focus particularly on the Hispanic immigrant family experience since it has the largest minority representation in the region.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to explore the cultural experiences of Hispanic immigrants in a rural US community in regards to being integrated into the local housing community. Therefore, the study addresses the following research questions:

### **Research Questions**

1. What are Hispanic immigrants' experiences of being integrated into rural community in Kansas?
2. How do rural Hispanic immigrants negotiate their residency status in the US in terms of seeking and obtaining housing?



3. What are the challenges and opportunities that rural Hispanic immigrants face in terms of being integrated into their local housing community?

### **Significance of the Study**

From coast to coast, rural America has become the new destination hot spot for immigrants and their families; thus, the topic of housing and the well-being of immigrant families is becoming more pertinent than in past decades. By contrast, relatively little documentation exists about the housing experiences of Hispanic immigrants in rural America, one of the fastest growing demographics (Stepler & Brown, 2016). To build a more socially equitable community, the mission of community planning is critical. Typically, while community planning can have an interdisciplinary professional approach in academia, in the planning profession community planning refers to planning with the aid of the community (Minkler, 2005; Wates, 2014). This is because of planning initiatives, such as access to adequate and affordable housing, benefit from community input (Brabham, 2009; Taub, 1990). Hence, this research provides a platform for members of the Hispanic immigrant community to shed light on the housing matter, thus more specifically expressing the needs of the community. This study recognizes that an effective community planning agenda requires members from various immigrant groups participating in improving the community planning efforts.

In the case of Finney County, which reflects a rural presence of various cultures and a plethora of linguistic abilities, planning for an immigrant and multi-ethnic community must be well thought out. Therefore, this study will pave the way for future studies by focusing on the immigrant group with the largest representation in the community. To bridge the gaps in information and to better clarify the housing experience of such immigrants, this study will be guided by the housing career framework (Murdie, 2002).

In previous studies, housing career is a term used interchangeably with housing trajectory to describe the “succession of dwellings occupied over a lifetime” (Kendig, 1984, p.272; Mudie, Chambon and Teixeira 2002). Numerous elements could influence such housing experiences; therefore, the study will employ an exploratory case study to capture the dynamics and build on the findings of previous studies (Özüekren and Kempen 2002; Muride 2003; Murdie 2002; Kendig 1984; Clark, Marinus and Deurloo 2003; Mudie, Chambon and Teixeira 2002; Shio, 2006).

Moreover, this study provides a specific, detailed account of how the housing shortage in Finney County is currently impacting the Hispanic immigrant population and potentially other immigrants. By identifying the challenges and also the opportunities immigrants encounter when searching for housing, this study has an opportunity to provide additional demographic information, particularly on newer immigrants with limited means, to equip community planners, developers, community members, and policymakers to serve better a rapidly growing constituency when making policies and programs. Also, this study could contribute to the current momentum that is brewing in Washington regarding immigrants and their place in America.

## **Chapter Summary**

This chapter has set the stage for the research study. It has presented the background information, the purpose of the study, the research questions, and the significance of the study. Overall, the research on the housing experience of Hispanic immigrants can supply the community with additional information on how to improve certain aspects of the immigrant community. For the developer, it could shed light on the severity of the housing shortage, and present possible opportunities for future development. For the local planning commission, this study provides a well-documented, on the ground account for further examination. For local planners, the study would offer new, relevant information about the current housing needs of Hispanic immigrants and how planners can improve their quality of life. For the research community, focused on the well-being of immigrants in rural America, the study results could help tighten the knowledge gap that currently exists when referring to housing and Hispanic immigrants in rural America. Finally, the discussion in the study aims to provide some recommendations to elected officials responsible for making policy.

## Chapter 2 - Literature Review

### *Migration Shift*

Times have changed in ways most have never imagined, what was deemed impossible a generation ago is taken for granted today. Globalization and technology, opposite sides of the same coin, have shrunk distances in the world and subsequently have created regional winners and losers (Brown & Swanson, 2004; Longworth, 2008). Among the most significant macro-level factors affecting rural America communities, globalization and human capital flight have been at the forefront of the discussion (Artz, 2003; Brown & Swanson, 2004; Carr & Kefalas, 2009; Cole, 2009; Longworth, 2008; Waldorf, 2007 ).

In particular, clearly, the future of rural America is looking dreary: it is hemorrhaging young adults, and increasingly, communities are left to sustain themselves with a rapidly aging population. Countrywide, one in two rural counties has more deaths than births. Also, more than 700 rural counties have reportedly lost 10% or more of their population since 1980 (Carr, 2009). The increasing out-migration of a vibrant cohort group, such as young, educated workers, is an alarming threat to the social and economic fabric of current and future rural communities (Brown & Swanson, 2004; Artz, 2003). There are several causes of brain drain, but it can be categorized by push and pull factors. Push factors such as unemployment and poverty are the core reason why people leave rural regions. Pull factors are the enticing opportunities that draw people to urban regions such as increased wealth. Meanwhile, communities are left to sustain themselves with a rapidly aging population (Carr & Kefalas, 2009; Artz, 2003; Arzaghi & Rupasingha, 2013). Economic development is the essence of any community; thus, the exodus of potential workers will have adverse consequences such as loss of potential entrepreneurs, loss of the county's investment in education, loss of tax revenue, loss of skilled workers, and possibly

loss of confidence in the economy, thus encouraging others to depart also rather than stay (Carr & Kefalas, 2009; Artz, 2003; Waldorf, 2007). The impact is evident in diminished community capacity, high levels of poverty, weak infrastructure, and increasing housing costs. The unraveling of rural America has long been underway, and while larger communities have the potential to weather the storm, at the current rate, smaller ones will vanish in time (Jensen, 2006).

### *Impact of Globalization*

While globalization may be an elusive term to many, nonetheless, it has caused tangible and rippling damage in rural America. The forces reshaping rural America could be attributed to the effects of a highly competitive and shrinking world, the economic survival of the fittest (Longworth, 2008). Addressing this issue, in the World Economic Outlook, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) assesses how trade, technology, and immigration have become increasingly intertwined in the world's labor markets. Exports and imports are important catalysts for economic growth. As globalization is taking full effect, trade in goods and services has proven to exert a profound influence on the economic development of any country that chooses to participate. Current International trade fosters an atmosphere of intense global competitiveness, and therefore business sectors have to become much more proficient to compete (World Economic Outlook, 2013).

Therefore, at an unprecedented rate, workers in even relatively prosperous countries are left in a state of uncertainty. For instance, after the collapse of communism, two billion new workers were rapidly injected into the global economy. Thus, the pie had to be sliced among 3.5 billion workers, instead of the previous 1.5 billion workers. Also, the fundamental business principle of minimizing cost to maximize profit is in the driver's seat still, and two billion

workers are willing to work cheaply; therefore, the first world labor force has to work for smaller wages to compete. Gone are the days where the color of one's collar was a shield against this monsoon business trend. Few occupations are outsourced proof; the rest are dispensable (Longworth, 2008).

Initially, rural America had benefited from business practices by companies that relocated to rural towns from metropolitan cities to minimize union power and labor cost. For instance, the big four meat packers in Chicago, Armour, Cudahy, Swift, and Wilson, moved to Midwestern towns; the big three car manufacturers, Ford, General Motors, and Chrysler relocated to rural Midwest cities and later relocated to the rural south. In each case, the town's economy was helped significantly. Thus, for generations, the biggest employers in parts of the Midwest were factories that built John Deere tractors and Maytag washers (Carr & Kefalas, 2009).

Industrial jobs in America, before NAFTA and other free trade agreements, encouraged outsourcing, provided a strong sense of job security for the people employed in the manufacturing sectors and allowed them to be members of the middle class, but those glory days started to dwindle when manufacturing in the United States began to weaken in the 1970s. Between 1967 and 2001, the U.S. reported that it lost nine percent of manufacturing jobs when the Northeast and the Midwest reported 40 percent job loss (Cole, 2009). Since 2001, U.S. has lost 42,400 factories, and 90,000 manufacturing companies are at risk of going out of business. In 1999, total manufacturing gross domestic product was at 17 percent; by 2008, it had dropped to 11.5 percent. Clearly, deindustrialization has had a significant impact on the American economy. Some argue, what should be alarming is that economic opportunities for rural America in the post-industrial era are much fewer than for metropolitan areas (McCormack, 2009).

Moreover, globalization is changing farming in rural America the same way it systematically affected manufacturing. In 1970, there were three million farmers; however, in recent years, the number has dropped to 2.2 million. Over 80 percent of farmers reported less than \$100,000 in sales, thus representing an average annual income of \$20,000. Approximately 200,000 farms are classified as intermediate farms, reporting sales that range from \$100,000 to \$250,000, averaging \$40,000 net income per year. The numbers show that intermediate farms are too small to compete in the age of globalism; yet third world countries spend much less on farm labor, land, shipping, and processing. The ones leading the charge in the U.S. are the commercial farms, those bigger than a thousand acres. The average big commercial farmer with sixteen hundred acres reports nearly \$700,000 in sales per year. Additionally, commercial farms produce 68 percent of U.S. farm output (Longworth, 2008).

Some argue the impact of globalization in rural areas has lasting consequences, and logically, brain drain in rural America will not slow or reverse if serious solutions are not implemented to foster an atmosphere of a promising economic future. Global market shifts, deregulation, privatization, social impacts, environmental impacts, cultural impacts, and lack of economic opportunity are all reasons to be concerned about the future of rural communities (Artz, 2003; Brown & Swanson, 2004; Carr & Kefalas, 2009; Dudenhefer, 1993; Longworth, 2008; McCormack, 2009). Significant strides need to be made to retain high achieving youth; the community as a whole has to reverse the mentality that “to achieve” is to leave (Carr & Kefalas, 2009).

### *Retooling Rural America*

First, retooling small towns for a global economy requires educating the youth not headed to college with tangible skills aimed at employment in growing industries such as biotech and

technology. It would also require upgrading the digital technology infrastructure in small communities. Another slow moving process that should be pursued aggressively is energy independence, which would provide energy security, supply and price stability, and also a demand for domestically produced energy. Rural America would also benefit from being forward thinking and embracing the green economy and sustainable agriculture (Carr & Kefalas, 2009).

The growth of agribusiness and big-box retailing that stifle local ownership might be too late to stop, but bringing opportunities for new blue-collar wage is possible if the mode of operation changes. Richard Longworth author of *Caught in the Middle: America heartland in the age of globalism*, suggests a unique approach for rural America to compete in the global arena. He argues that while globalization provides the Midwest states with regional problems, it also offers regional opportunities. Midwest states have the potential to succeed if they would collaborate with neighboring states instead of competing with them. Developing such a strategy depends first on clarifying state boundary origination. Some Midwestern states are constrained by boundary lines drawn over 220 years ago. Specifically, the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 and the Louisiana Purchase of 1803 formed state boundaries before most of the Midwest had formed. For example, one of the Midwest's richest resources is the Great Lakes, holding about 18 percent of all the fresh surface water on earth. These lakes offer a great opportunity for regions to work together and strengthen their competitive advantage (Longworth, 2008). If rural America came up with a plausible strategy to compete on the global stage, it might be able to plug the brain drain.



### *Retool with Immigrants?*

From the dawn of the republic, The United States of America has been a collection of immigrants. According to new projections developed by the Pew Research Center, immigrants are expected to considerably change the racial and ethnic makeup of the United States in the coming years. The total U.S population is projected to rise to 441 million in 2065, and the 88% population increase based on 2015 figures will be attributed to immigrants and their descendants (Lopez, Passel & Rohal, 2015). Therefore, some suggest that new immigrants may have the potential to solve the depopulation problem in rural America.

Economists have long documented the connection between economic growth and immigration; generally, immigration increases the wage of native-born Americans (Furchtgott-Roth, 2013). At a time, when the nation is facing a public debt of over \$16 trillion while only having an economic growth rate of around two percent, adopting a more strategic legal immigration system can radically better the current financial state (Furchtgott-Roth, 2013). For instance, entitlement programs, like Social Security and Medicare, are stretched thin. Thus, immigrant contributions can help finance these programs (American Immigration Council, 2016). Contrary to popular belief, even undocumented workers contribute to social security, but usually don't collect any benefits (Porter, 2005). Therefore, welcoming immigrants to the rural region has the potential to be beneficial if done so strategically (Carr, Lichter, Kefalas, 2012).

Historically, various waves of immigrants have come into the country further stirring the melting pot. At the turn of the 20th century, the immigrant wave shifted from Northwestern to Southern and Eastern European (Jensen, 2006). Then, in 1965, an amendment was made to the Immigration and Nationality Act that ended the quota system based on national origin (Massey,

1995). Consequently, new waves of immigrants mainly from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and other developing countries started settling in the country (Jensen, 2006; Massey, 1995).

Today, however, immigration is an indicator of how the nation is not dealing tactically with the challenges of a changing world even while it may have the potential to be a long-lasting solution for dying rural American communities; however, immigration policy currently in place will not work (Carr, & Kefalas, 2009; Carr, Lichter & Kefalas, 2012). Regardless of the century in which large-scale immigration has manifested, public opinion has never failed to question the potentially negative economic and social impact new immigrants may have on the region. Thus, incoming immigrants face the questions the ones before them faced, questions derived from fear, doubt, and uncertainty. The present, often highly polarized, debate over immigration perpetuates the suspicion raised by past generations. The same old questions still surface; will immigrants take native-born people's jobs? Are they a drain on local coffers? Are they importing poverty? Will they learn English? Do they bring crime? Are they a drain on social services? The often misguided notions have long been part of the nation's discourse (Jacobson, 2008; Isbister, 1996; Jensen, 2006).

As documented, immigration in many rural counties has come about unexpectedly, and that has at times been contentious (Jenson, 2006). Low-skilled workers have accused immigrants of causing wages in their local towns to fall, due to their willingness to work cheaply (Marrow, 2009). Empirical evidence overall does not support the assertions that immigration and unemployment are correlated. While immigrants do take some native-born people's jobs, this occurs only where skill sets overlap, which is in a small proportion of cases (American Immigration Council, 2016; Furchtgott-Roth, 2013). Thus, while some communities may be

overtly xenophobic, the ones who have been more welcoming have seen their economy improve (Jensen, L.2006).

The magnet that is currently drawing immigrants to the heartland is meatpacking while the Southeast region focuses more on manufacturing, food processing, and agriculture. Meanwhile, the Mountain West and the West Coast attract immigrants with their tourism-based economies. The new waves of immigrants, specifically in rural areas, are more likely to be employed than native-born residents (Jensen, 2006). Thus, it may be logical to fill the population void of rural America with immigrants who are willing to work, pay taxes, and own property (Carr, 2009). Nevertheless, if rural communities want to pursue immigration as a way to sustain their dwindling communities, they would need to take active steps to reduce the negatives and enhance the positives (Jensen, 2006). Moreover, if attracting immigrants to rural regions were to become a legitimate survival strategy, then recruiting immigrants with unique skills also would be wise. Currently, however, mostly low wage-seeking immigrants are flocking to rural communities (Carr, Lichter, Kefalas, 2012; “Cities welcoming immigrants,” 2015).

Presently, the country faces a broken immigration system, and over 11 million undocumented immigrants have established roots. (American Immigration Council, 2016). The often superficial opposition talking points that are echoed by some Washington politicians has successfully managed to hijack the comprehensive immigration reform debate and put a halt to any progress of a bipartisan solution to the immigration problem. In the past, well-intentioned reforms such as the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986, the Special Agricultural Worker program (SAW), and more recently, executive actions such as the Consideration of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), have only temporarily

alleviated the problem and do not attempt to fix the deep-rooted issues (Jenson, 2006; USCIS, 2016; Isbister, 1996).

### *Hispanics*

According to the U.S Census Bureau, **“Hispanics or Latinos** are those people who classified themselves in one of the specific Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino categories listed on the Census questionnaire--Mexican, Puerto Rican, or Cuban[--as] well as those who indicate that they are [of] another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin. People who do not identify with one of the specific origins listed on the questionnaire but indicate that they are [of] another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin are those whose origins are from Spain, the Spanish-speaking countries of Central or South America, or the Dominican Republic.” (The U.S. Census Bureau) As of 2014, the population in the United States was estimated to be Hispanic or Latino. Notably, Hispanics are younger with a median age of 29 while non-Hispanic whites are 43, non-Hispanic blacks are 34, and Asians are at 36 (Pew Research Center, 2015).

In 2015, one in four newborns in the U.S. was Hispanic (Wiltz, 2015). This is partly explained by the structure and composition of immigrant families, especially from Mexico and Central America, being different. The size of a Hispanic household tends to be significantly larger than that of most ethnic groups. For example, of the Hispanic populations in the United States, Mexicans are the largest with Hispanic roots. Notably, the Mexican culture is deeply rooted in collectivism, a large family structure with mostly a Roman Catholic religion influence (Alaniz & Gilly, 1986). Culturally, divorce is discouraged. Thus, Mexican families tend to be led by two parent household and have a lower divorce rate (Raley, Durden & Wildsmith, 2004).

In general, the larger household size has been attributed to cultural expectations that encourage larger families, an inclusion of extended family members, and the influence of the Catholic religion and its disapproval of contraception methods (Alvirez, 1973; Alaniz & Gilly, 1986). However, the notion of attributing higher Hispanic fertility rates to cultural norms is not

without its critics (Hartnett and Parrado, 2012). Furthermore, extended family may include grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins; close ties may even extend to third uncles and cousins. It is also customary for Mexican and Central American children to live with their parents until they get married (Keefe, Padilla, & Carlos, 1979; Alaniz & Gilly, 1986; Hernandez, 1996). Consequently, Hispanic households experience higher crowding than most ethnic groups (Burr, Mutchler, & Gerst, 2010).

As all this relates to research of immigrants, evidence shows they tend to gravitate to and settle in areas that have already formed networks; the social support can be vital for their successful integration into a new country. A close-knit community fosters an atmosphere that promotes community-based facilities, such as elder care, day care, and religious congregations that are inviting to other immigrants considering moving to those areas (Agrawal, 2010; Borjas, 2002; Freeman, 2000;). More recently, population growth in rural communities has been attributed more to Hispanic births rather than to inflow of immigrants arriving in new destination countries (Lichter, D. T., Sanders, S. R., & Johnson, K. M., 2015).

Nonetheless, the growth of Hispanics in rural communities has concerning similarities. For instance, Hispanics born in rural regions are more likely to face poverty than those in the cities where 47% of Hispanic children born in rural America are born poor, compared to 41% in more urban regions (Wiltz, 2015). Researchers have found health care for Hispanic children, who are citizens, could also be an obstacle if their parents are undocumented; the fear of being discovered causes undocumented parents to refrain from seeking healthcare for themselves and their children. From the start, these disadvantages put at risk their future opportunities. (Lichter, D. T., Sanders, S. R., & Johnson, K. M., 2015).

Finally, the rural Hispanic population has a tendency to be young and faced with economic and social obstacles that stem from high rates of poverty and lower education (Saenz,

2008). Hispanic immigrants that come mainly come from Mexico and Central America often get employed in agriculture, meat processing plants, industrial farms, plant nurseries, and dairies. Therefore, even if both parents are employed, many households still struggle due to wages being low (Wiltz, 2015).

### *Kansas: Diversity*

Kansas, the land that encompasses the geographic center of the contiguous United States, is mainly known for being the leading wheat producer in the country, but arguably, diversity or successful integration of immigrants has not been one of its accomplishments (Nosowitz, 2015). According to the 2015 Population Estimate Program (PEP), the Kansas population was estimated at 2,911,641; where 86.7% identified as White alone, 11.6% identified as Hispanic or Latino, 6.3% identified as Black or African American alone, 2.9% identified as Asian alone and 1.2% identified as Native American alone. Finally, the total number of foreign-born persons from 2011-2015 came to 6.9%. However, some counties have accounted for a significant number of foreign-born persons in Kansas making such a county a majority-minority county. According to the ACS 2011-2015, foreign-born persons in Seward County accounted for 30.3%, in Ford County 27.7%, in Finney County 21.3%, in Grant County 18%, and in Wyandotte County 15.3%; all of these counties reported numbers above the 13.2% average for the United States. Partially explaining this phenomenon, the local expansion of meatpacking in southwest Kansas has been an enticing pull factor for immigrant workers and their families, leading to racial shifts in a few counties.

### *Immigrants in Finney County*

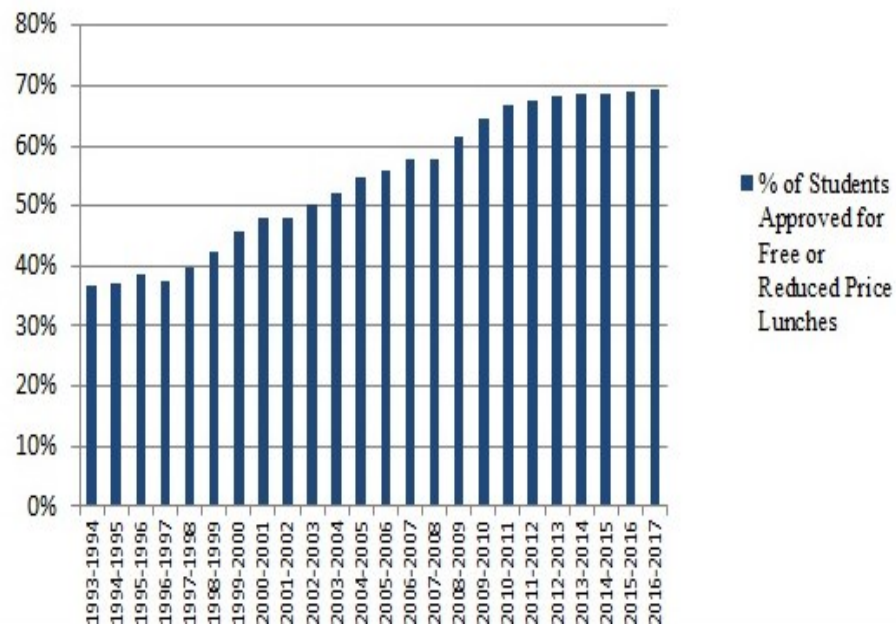
According to the PEP, in 2015 Finney County had a population of 37,188; specifically, 48.6% are documented to be Hispanic, or Latino (of any race), and 43.2% are registered as white

alone (not Hispanic or Latino) and 3.1% are black or African American. According to ACS 2011-2015, 7,914 are registered as foreign-born. The median income in 2015 was \$49,227, with 17% of individuals living below the poverty level. The county's economy consists mainly of farming, ranching, and manufacturing. According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Economic Research Service, Finney County specializes in manufacturing. For example, Tyson Foods, Inc. has a large plant in Holcomb, KS seven miles from Garden City, KS. The plant has become a vital catalyst for the region's economy, which in turn has encouraged population growth over the years, attracting immigrants and their families to the region. It has been reported that 14 languages are spoken at Tyson, and signs in the lunchroom are displayed in English, Spanish and Vietnamese (Klepper, 2010).

Initially, the region's first influx of immigrants were European immigrants who displaced the Native Americans. Also, economic opportunities such as the railroad and sugar beet plant were appealing to Mexican immigrants looking for employment (Klepper, 2010). Then, at the peak of the Southeast Asian refugee inflow in 1980, refugees from Vietnam and Laos were among the main newcomers to Garden City, KS. Eventually, the demographic started shifting towards Mexican and Central American immigrants. This was due to several factors, but strategic recruiting practices from meatpacking plants that targeted Mexican and Central American immigrants was at the core (Benson, 1996).

More recently, Somalis, Burmese, and Ethiopians have been the new additions to the ethnic tapestry of Garden City, KS (Lowe, 2013). In the Garden City schools, discounting English, 35 languages and dialects are spoken (Healy, 2016). Naturally, expected challenges come with navigating the territory of teaching students with various language backgrounds. Also, many families with children K-12 struggle to pay for their children's lunch meals. For instance,

as Figure 1 shows, the percent of students approved for free or reduced-price lunches has increased in the past two decades, sustaining its peak number to date at 69% for the 2016-2017 academic year. As Table 1 shows for 2016-2017, 2,687 male students and 2,456 female students receive free lunch while 544 male students and 522 female students receive reduced-price lunch from a total of 8,947 students.



**Figure 1.** Percentage of Finney County Students Approved for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch

Data source: [http://uapps.ksde.org/k12/county.aspx?cnty\\_no=028](http://uapps.ksde.org/k12/county.aspx?cnty_no=028)



	TOTAL	TOTAL		FREE LUNCH		REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH		SPECIAL EDUC.	
SCHOOL YEAR	ALL	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEM.	MALE	FEM.	MALE	FEM.
1992-1993	8139	4251	3888						
1993-1994	8294	4320	3974					360	163
1994-1995	8378	4329	4049					341	155
1995-1996	8480	4381	4099					362	179
1996-1997	8555	4418	4137					464	215
1997-1998	8652	4424	4228	0	0	0	0	499	242
1998-1999	8799	4491	4308					530	268
1999-2000	8989	4581	4408	1674	1565	448	421	584	313
2000-2001	9047	4634	4413	1681	1596	550	505	658	342
2001-2002	8990	4580	4410	1670	1660	507	468	698	423
2002-2003	8958	4543	4415	1772	1717	528	500	675	386
2003-2004	8884	4541	4343	1861	1745	526	494	674	399
2004-2005	8782	4468	4314	1889	1837	558	508	658	382
2005-2006	8651	4399	4252	1868	1787	623	570	682	384
2006-2007	8588	4376	4212	2019	1919	533	492	531	307
2007-2008	8486	4294	4192	1893	1875	598	545	588	349
2008-2009	8469	4273	4196	1997	1988	647	561	578	347
2009-2010	8759	4458	4301	2300	2257	597	512	630	353
2010-2011	8869	4551	4318	2409	2273	639	596	593	322
2011-2012	8935	4574	4361	2449	2362	629	607	628	359
2012-2013	8852	4552	4300	2419	2361	671	577	656	356
2013-2014	8811	4526	4285	2486	2340	625	609	679	356
2014-2015	8957	4625	4332	2621	2429	586	514	701	350
2015-2016	9070	4651	4419	2689	2463	561	545	713	340
2016-2017	8947	4635	4312	2687	2456	544	522	711	335

**Table 1.** Finney County Head Count Showing Free Lunch, Reduced-Price Lunch and Adjusted Education

Data source: [http://uapps.ksde.org/k12/county.aspx?cnty\\_no=028](http://uapps.ksde.org/k12/county.aspx?cnty_no=028)

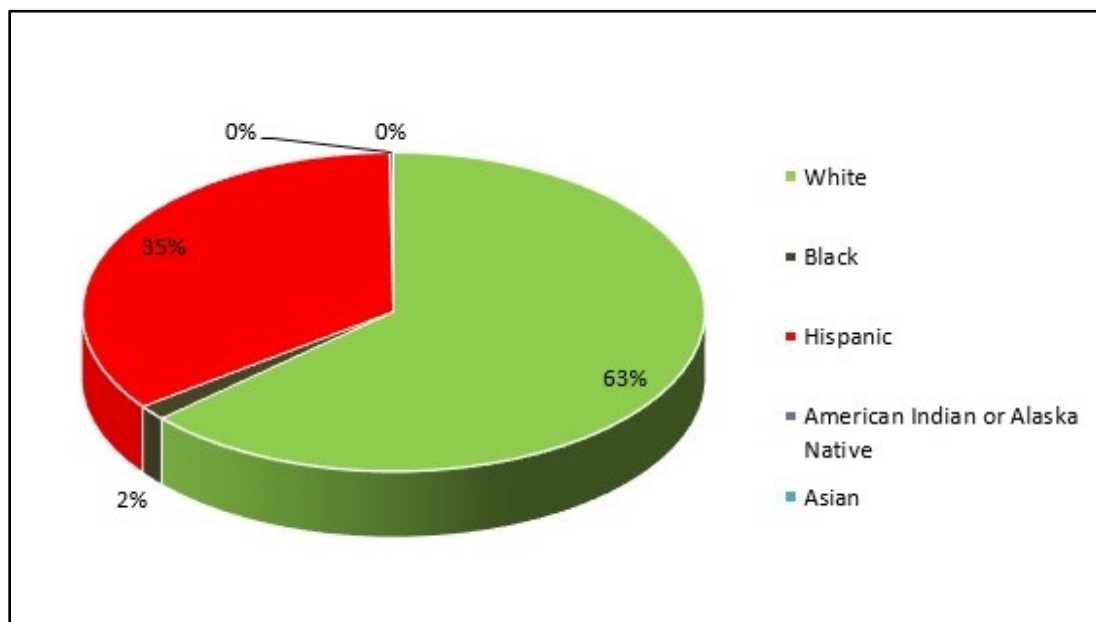
The notion of white flight, a sociological phenomenon that defines the departure of white members of a community mainly populated by minorities, has been the topic of discussion when referring to Garden City, KS over the decades (Volk, 2011). To support that theory, Table 2 demonstrates the significant decline in white students over the years. More specifically, in Figure 2 for the 1992-1993 academic year, Whites made up 63% of the public school district while Hispanics accounted for 35%. Fast-forward to 2016-2017, in Figure 3 Whites have declined to comprise only 26% of the school district while Hispanics have become the majority at 66%. As Table 2 shows, no Asian students registered until the 2009-2010 academic year while the black population stayed around 2% throughout the 25 years data was made available by the Kansas Department of Education.

SCHOOL YEAR	TOTAL	TOTAL		WHITE		BLACK		HISPANIC		AMER. INDIAN OR ALASKA NATIVE		ASIAN		MULTI-ETHNIC	
	ALL	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE
1992-1993	8139	4251	3888	2518	2387	69	49	1452	1253	16	<10*				
1993-1994	8294	4320	3974	2498	2366	72	55	1521	1345	22	17				
1994-1995	8378	4329	4049	2379	2295	66	55	1650	1501	20	12				
1995-1996	8480	4381	4099	2304	2215	70	59	1803	1648	28	15				
1996-1997	8555	4418	4137	2209	2133	82	63	1955	1769	19	14				
1997-1998	8652	4424	4228	2143	2067	70	65	2033	1906	18	20				
1998-1999	8799	4491	4308	2110	1971	74	76	2155	2078	15	22				
1999-2000	8989	4581	4408	2024	1941	70	57	2349	2247	14	17				
2000-2001	9047	4634	4413	1955	1861	74	63	2467	2339	17	10				
2001-2002	8990	4580	4410	1871	1793	70	74	2497	2409	27	11				
2002-2003	8958	4543	4415	1806	1731	65	60	2546	2486	19	13				
2003-2004	8884	4541	4343	1690	1631	55	53	2493	2343	13	10			184	197
2004-2005	8782	4468	4314	1611	1528	53	42	2498	2413	12	10			219	228
2005-2006	8651	4399	4252	1516	1426	40	47	2476	2389	13	<10*			281	292
2006-2007	8588	4376	4212	1398	1327	48	43	2511	2436	11	<10*			295	287
2007-2008	8486	4294	4192	1382	1298	57	52	2500	2471	<10*	<10*			268	275
2008-2009	8469	4273	4196	1352	1271	57	49	2480	2468	<10*	<10*			272	291
2009-2010	8759	4458	4301	1381	1281	64	47	2773	2741	15	11	145	144	80	76
2010-2011	8869	4551	4318	1367	1275	69	37	2839	2739	13	13	188	179	75	75
2011-2012	8935	4574	4361	1323	1259	51	32	2908	2792	13	15	209	190	70	73
2012-2013	8852	4552	4300	1304	1209	48	41	2919	2776	15	14	200	192	66	68
2013-2014	8811	4526	4285	1244	1172	57	43	2935	2795	16	15	203	183	71	77
2014-2015	8957	4625	4332	1238	1172	63	50	3023	2813	20	11	212	204	69	82
2015-2016	9070	4651	4419	1205	1150	66	60	3093	2923	16	15	193	182	78	89
2016-2017	8947	4635	4312	1195	1111	82	65	3081	2853	15	18	178	174	84	91

**Table 2.** Year Totals Finney County Headcount Enrollment by Year, Race, and Gender.

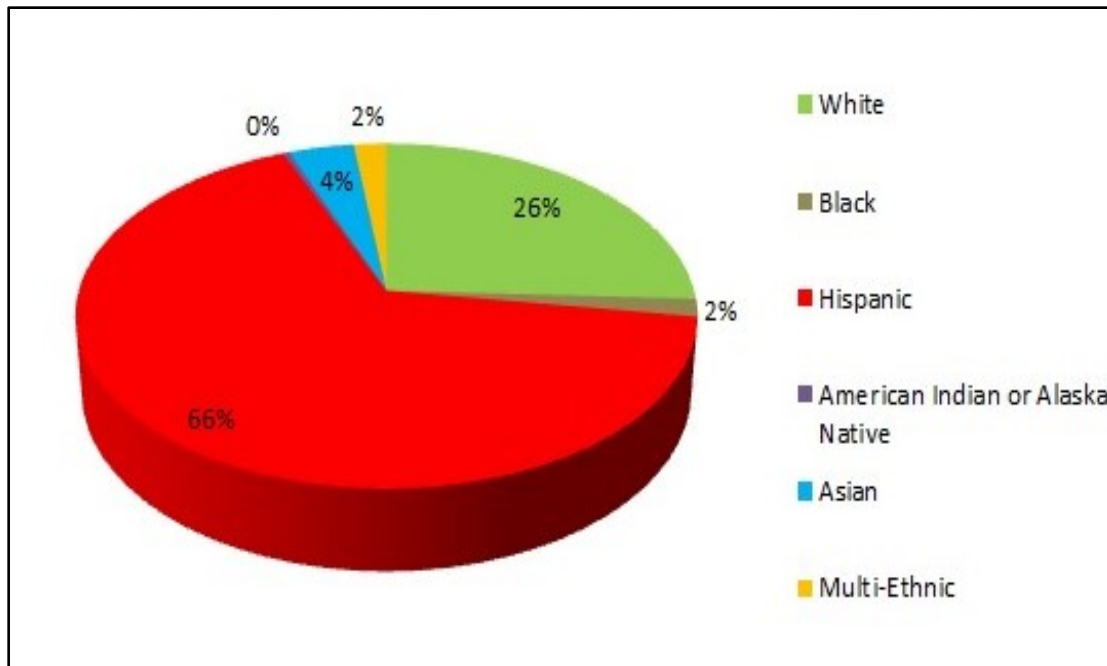
Data source: [http://uapps.ksde.org/k12/county.aspx?cnty\\_no=028](http://uapps.ksde.org/k12/county.aspx?cnty_no=028)

\* “The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) prevents the disclosure of personally identifiable student information. KSDE has determined that any quantities less than 10 may be personally identifiable.”



**Figure 2.** 1992-1993 Finney County Headcount Enrollment Percentage by Race

Data source: [http://uapps.ksde.org/k12/county.aspx?cnty\\_no=028](http://uapps.ksde.org/k12/county.aspx?cnty_no=028)



**Figure 3.** 2016-2017 Finney County Headcount Enrollment Percentage by Race

Data source: [http://uapps.ksde.org/k12/county.aspx?cnty\\_no=028](http://uapps.ksde.org/k12/county.aspx?cnty_no=028)

The next sections address integration with respect to the housing and culture issues attendant to the increase in the number of immigrants to Finney County, Kansas.

### *Housing Career*

The theory of housing career was initiated by the research of Hal L. Kendig and highlights the distinct paths households take in the quest to improve their housing (Clark, Deurloo & Dieleman, 2003). The notion of housing career is drawn from behavioral models that emphasize “preference, perception and decision making” of individuals and households (Ozuekren & Kempen, p. 367). Fortunately, “Housing career provides a useful way of, “integrating the residential mobility and filtering literature in understanding the operation of the housing market” (Kendig, 1984, p.271). The concept of housing career has a strong connection between life-course and housing market behavior, showing that households tend to travel a path that leads them to their long-term housing preferences (Clark, Deurloo & Dieleman, 2003).

Early studies of housing careers of immigrants have shed light on significant obstacles immigrants experience such as segregation, affordability issues, and restricted mobility (Cutler, Glaeser, & Vigdor, 2008; Murdie, 2003; Kendig, 1984). To better clarify immigrant housing issues, the conceptual framework for this housing career study draws from the model developed by Murdie, Chambon, Hulchanski & Teixeira (1999) that shows the factors affecting the housing trajectories of immigrant households (Figure 4).

### *Housing Life-cycle*

In 1955, Peter H. Rossi presented a study, '*Why Families Move: A Study in the Social Psychology of Urban Residential Mobility*,' and challenged mainstream views on residential mobility. His central premise was that families moved due to change in, "household size, age, and gender mix;" and argued a house that was acceptable in one life stage would not be suitable in another life stage. Rossi's work started gaining traction years later when other studies such as those of William & Moore in 1980 and Michelson in 1977 started publishing similar findings ("Citation Classic," 1988). As a result, Rossi's work became the foundation of other studies on residential mobility and lifecycle. However, some have challenged his hypothesis (Clark & Onaka 1983).

Over the years, researchers have not unanimously agreed on the model for the life-cycle. However, Wells and Gubar (1966) offered the reasonable hypothesis that most households in the United States pass through the following stages:

1. The bachelor stage; young, single people.
2. Newly married couples; young, no children.
3. The full nest I; young married couples with dependent children.
  - a) Youngest child under six.

- b) Youngest child six or over.
- 4. The full nest II; older married couples with dependent children.
- 5. The empty nest; older married couples with no children living with them.
  - a) Head in the labor force.
  - b) Head retired.
- 6. The solitary survivors; older single people.
  - a) In labor force.
  - b) Retired.

Changes in the "size, composition and housing preference of households" in the housing life-cycle model, are linked to different stages of a family's evolution (Marrow-Jones & Wenning 2005, p.1, 741). Major events such as marriage, newborn child, children leaving the nest, or death of a spouse often lead to a new stage of the family life-cycle. (Clark & Onaka, 1983; Kendig, 1984). When a family grows, more space is needed, but then family expenses would also increase; thus, owning a home might become difficult (Payne and Payne, 1977). When children reach adulthood and leave their parents' home, parents tend to downsize. Therefore, housing characteristics become unacceptable when the location, type of housing tenure, and number of bedrooms and bathrooms no longer satisfy the needs of the family. Eventually, households tend to relocate to meet their evolving needs and preferences (Clark & Onaka, 1983).

A demographic characteristic such as age could be a vital factor when it comes to housing. Younger individuals are more likely to rent rather than own while they pursue an education or start a full-time occupation (DeVaney, Chiremba, & Vincent, 2004). Thus, renting is usually seen as a transitory phase, with homeownership being the ideal long term goal (Winstanley, Thorns, & Perkins, 2002). Even though the life-cycle stage is an important

indicator of homeownership, it is not independent of household income (Bonnar, 1979).

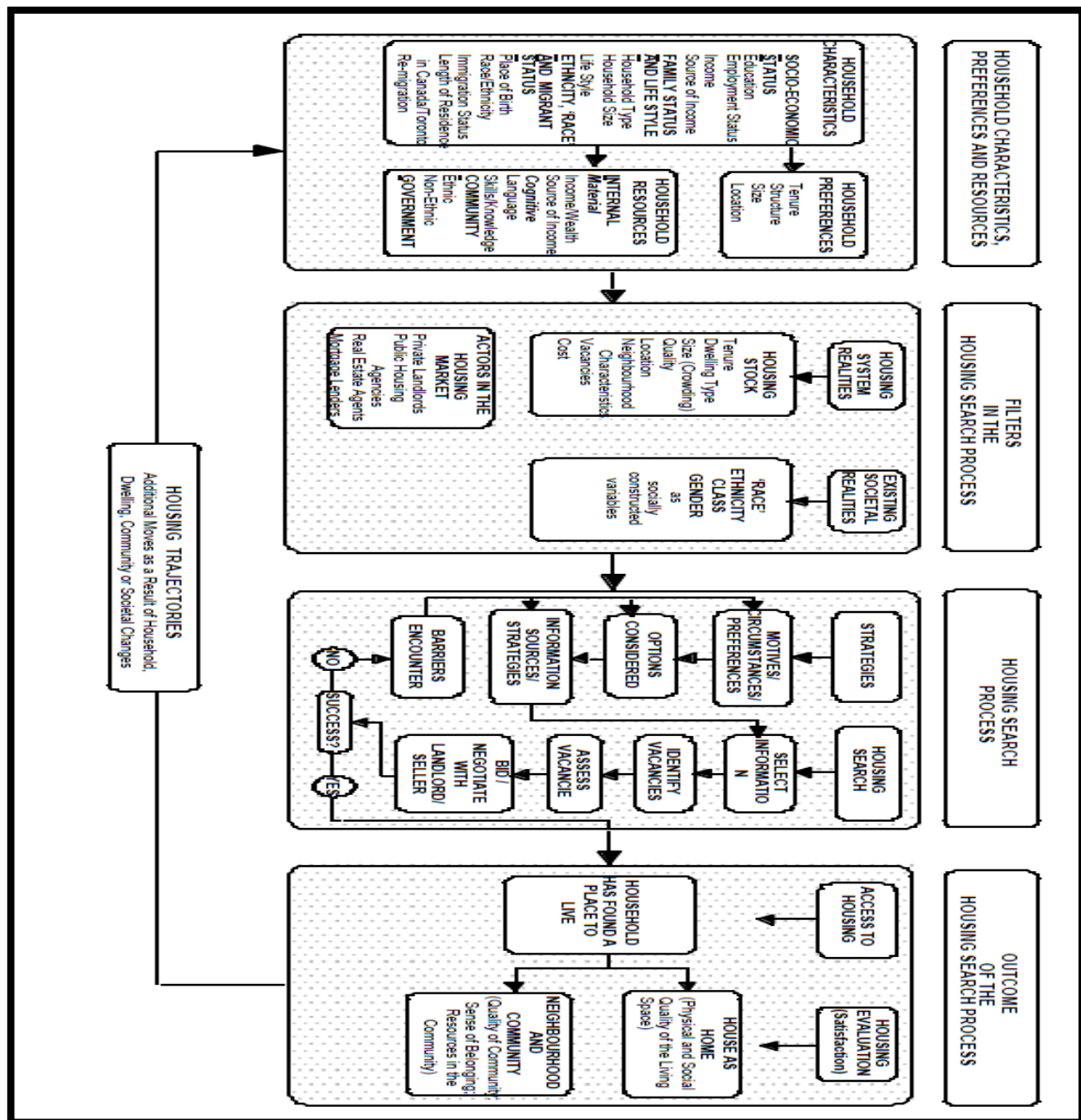
Therefore, an individual with a higher education is expected to have a higher income, and income is a good indicator of a household's ability to move up. When individuals become older, they tend to earn more income and accrue savings (Gyourko & Linneman, 1997; Doling, 1976; Kendig, 1984). By the same token, being married tends to increase the possibility of upward mobility as marriage usually leads to two individuals combining their income for one household. However, getting divorced and becoming elderly are expected to increase the likelihood of downward mobility (Speare & Goldscheider, 1987).

Nevertheless, the life-cycle model is not without criticism. Some argue that the life-cycle model has a normative nature that does not reflect real life. Not all individuals complete or choose to go through the whole life-cycle; individuals may never get married, have dependents, or they might get separated or divorced (Pickvance, 1974). Thus, the traditional life cycle model focuses on typical family type and does not factor in different family structures that may stem from other circumstances such as cultural norms (Alaniz & Gilly, 1986).

### *Cultural Factors*

As noted in this study, the structure of Hispanic families, especially from Mexico and Central America, is notably different from that of a Caucasian family structure. Therefore, the traditional housing life-cycle model fails to factor in the important family dynamics that are due to cultural norms. Since children customarily live with their parents till they get married, the "bachelor stage" described by Wells and Gubar (1966) would not apply to most households. If parents tend to live with their children when they reach older age, then the "empty nest" phase and the "solitary survivor" phase would not be an accurate representation for immigrant families who live in a multi-generational household or have extended family living with them (Alaniz &

Gilly, 1986). To better understand the differences between a traditional Caucasian family organization and Hispanic, Hispanic family organization and family life cycle need to be addressed. Thus, the following figure depicts the conceptual framework of this study.



**Figure 4.** Housing Career Model.

This figure illustrates the factors affecting the housing trajectories of households (Murdie, 2002)

### *Household Characteristics, Preferences, and Resources*

The integration of immigrants into a local housing community is a multifaceted process; however, assimilation theory is key in clarifying the numerous dynamics that affect the integration of immigrants into a new country and region (Greenman & Xie, 2008). Clearly, ethnic identity is a key component of assimilation; for example, research has shown that the way people identify themselves and are viewed by society matters affects the assimilation process (Alba, 1990)

Assimilation theory is fundamental for understanding the various dynamics that affect the integration of immigrants into a new country (Greenman & Xie, 2008). It is important to state that more than a few assimilation theories have evolved over the last few centuries. However, a relatively mainstream view of assimilation theory proposes that an immigrant's length of stay in a host country allows the person to be better versed about the local housing market, increase income, and as a result lead to an advantageous housing circumstance (Krivo, 1995; Borjas, 2002). Social scientists have measured the level of an individual's assimilation into a country by using the following four benchmarks: (a) socioeconomic status: education level, occupation, earnings (b) Spatial Concentration (c) Language assimilation (d) intermarriage (Waters, & Jiménez, 2005).

However, a relatively low socioeconomic status of an immigrant is a major factor sidelining successful assimilation and decreasing the chance of gaining desired housing (Borjas, 1999; Borjas 2002). Furthermore, newer immigrants tend to gravitate to areas that already have formed ethnic enclaves; however, later in their assimilation process they tend not to rely on their social networks as much and eventually disperse (Van Kempen & Özüekren, 1998).



More recently, segmented assimilation has been used to explain the theory of housing adjustment in rural America (Atilas & Bohon 2003). Segmented assimilation argues that immigrants that settle in America don't necessarily successfully merge into mainstream culture. Some groups are faced with downward assimilation, which eventually may result in dire poverty. Therefore, immigrants in rural areas who live in less desirable housing conditions also face the risk of long-term adverse classification (Zhou, 1997; Atilas & Bohon 2003). Segmented assimilation has been used to explain the numerous experiences primarily of new waves of immigrants and their children to the United States from Asia, Latin American, Africa, and other developing countries (Jensen, 2006). Segmented assimilation argues that American society is highly diverse and segmented. Therefore, different ethnic groups are available where a new immigrant can initially settle. In the past, this theory was mainly used for describing immigrant groups in cities (Atilas & Bohon, 2003; Jensen, 2006).

Notably, immigration status has an impact on immigrants and their families. It is important to note distinct differences among various immigration statuses such as naturalized citizens, lawful permanent residents, conditional permanent residents, non-permanent temporary visas, undocumented immigrants, refugees, asylees & parolees (USCIS, 2016). Some statuses offer more security and longevity in the U.S while others are more temporary. Also, language barriers can be a significant hindrance to immediate assimilation. Language assimilation is an important indicator of an immigrant's ability to improve housing circumstances. This is because an immigrant well versed in the host country's language would be in a better position to negotiate rental rates or mortgage interest rates (Alba & Nee, 2005). However, community resources and social capital are also expected to be important factors in successful integration (Sanders & Nee, 1996). For instance, socioeconomic status is a vital component for

assessing the work experience and economic and social position of an individual; in fact, research has shown newer immigrants tend to have lower socioeconomic status and higher poverty rates, and most do not qualify for social welfare programs due to their immigrant status (Fix & Passel 2001).

Additionally, human capital refers to the "knowledge, information, ideas, skills, and health of individuals" (Becker, 2002 p. 3). In the current, highly competitive economic climate there is more emphasis on personal improvement; for example, pursuing higher education or receiving more training in a particular field is encouraged and expected (Becker, 2002). Therefore, households with higher levels of human capital are assumed to have a higher income; income is a reliable indicator of a household's ability to afford their housing expenses (Kendig, 1984; Becker, 2002). Also, higher levels of income lead to accumulated wealth, which has been an indicator of homeownership in past studies (Krivo and Kaufman, 2004).

Housing remains the most significant expenditure for families in the United States (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011). Therefore, high or excessive housing cost can be a major impediment to successful integration into the local community particularly for immigrant households in non-metro areas, which are more prone to housing cost burden. Historically, housing expenditures that surpass 30 percent of household income have been an indicator of lack of housing affordability; such a household is therefore classified as a burdened household. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development currently uses the 30 percent benchmark, which evolved from the United States National Housing Act of 1937 and was accorded official reference in 1981 (Schwartz & Wilson 2008; Belsky, Goodman, & Drew, 2005). Households that are considered burdened are further classified as at the marginal cost burden if the ratio is between 30 percent, and 50 percent and households are considered severely burdened if housing

cost exceeds 50 percent (Jewkes and Delgadillo, 2010). The 30 percent amount is considered suitable to allocate towards housing and still leave adequate income for nondiscretionary spending. However, studies have documented that low-income, minority, elderly, single female-headed households, and households with three or more dependents are prone to a higher housing cost burden (Chi and Laquatra 1998).

Notably, 42% of foreign-born households are cost burdened while only 28% of natives are cost burdened (Housing Assistance Council, 2007). Such metrics as housing cost burden ratios are used by the government mainly to assess the number of households that meet the requirements for public rent or mortgage assistance and to budget the amount of financial assistance for a qualifying household; thus, the percent of income spent on housing is the main indicator of housing affordability for public policy (Schwartz & Wilson, 2008; McConnell & Akresh, 2010). Additionally, the level of involvement that non-profit organizations, state-administered programs, and federal housing assistance programs invest to make a significant difference to an immigrant family trying to gain access to affordable housing is also considered (McConnell & Akresh, 2010).

Regarding household preferences, the four categories of the life-cycle (singles, single parent families, couples with children, and couples without children) are significant to housing choice. Also, any stage in the life-cycle especially one relating to children and marriage is strongly linked with transitions in housing; moving to a larger housing unit or making a home purchase is common (Myers and Lee, 1998). This is because households make housing moves based on circumstances whether an upward move, a lateral move, or a downward move. Therefore, assessing the factors that influenced the decision for a household to move in any

particular direction would shed light on that particular housing career (Clark, Deurloo & Dieleman, 2003).

### *Filters in the Housing Search Process*

Murdie, Chambon, Hulchanski and Teixeira (1999) state that immigrants are faced with two key filters in the housing search process: housing system realities and existing societal realities. Housing system realities are shaped mainly by the housing stock of a community: type of tenure, dwelling type, size, quality, location, neighborhood characteristics, vacancies and cost (Murdie, 2002; The U.S. Census Bureau). According to the American Community Survey, the total number of housing units in Finney County, KS from 2011-2015 was 13,290 with 12,600 of the housing units being occupied; moreover, 62% of the housing units were owner-occupied. The rental vacancy rate was 4%, and the homeowner vacancy rate was 0.5%. Also important is that only 49 of the housing units were built after 2010. Finally, the county had about 1,825 registered mobile homes.

Studies that focus on the housing challenges for immigrants in non-metro counties have addressed emerging immigration state, new immigration state, and a more established immigrant state, to compare and contrast the housing challenges in different regions throughout America. More specifically, the main factors that have been used to assess housing quality for immigrant farmworkers in rural America are as follow: dwelling characteristics, household characteristics, and household behaviors (Early, Davis and Quandt, 2006).

Dwelling characteristics pertain to tenure type, housing type, exterior material, the condition of the paint, the number of rooms, the number of bedrooms, number of bathrooms, and distance to agricultural fields. Household characteristics refer to a length of time in residence; household composition, household size, the number of children, the number of adults, the

number of farmworkers, crowding index, and farmworker per bathroom. Finally, household behavior addresses the following: the frequency in households of dusting, sweeping, mopping, and vacuuming (Early, Davis and Quandt, 2006)

Housing quality is a vital environmental determinant of an individual's health. Therefore, high levels of crowding and inadequate sanitation facilities foster an unsanitary environment. Living in overcrowded conditions and substandard housing can contribute to the contraction and spread of disease (Krieger & Higgins, 2002). Also, the housing environment individuals reside in, in their early stage of life, may have a long-term negative impact on their health (Early, Davis, and Quandt, 2006). Furthermore, immigrants in rural America are more likely to experience higher rates of substandard housing (Jensen, 2006). According to a report conducted by the American Housing Survey in 2005, rural immigrant household conditions are worse with respect to overcrowding than those of native households. More than 10% of non-metro immigrant households reflect crowded conditions, whereas only 1% of native households in non-metro areas experience crowding.

Furthermore, players in the housing market in the public and private sector shape housing system realities (Murdie, Chambon, Hulchanski and Teixeira, 1999). For instance, newer immigrants tend to rent their first housing unit; as a result, landlords and public housing agencies have an impact on immigrants' housing search process, in particular sometimes practicing discrimination, which would hinder access to good housing (Ondrich, Stricer, & Yinger, 1999). Also, existing societal realities such as race, ethnicity, class, and gender have been proven to disadvantage many immigrants in the housing search process (Mudie, 2003).

### *Housing Search Process*

The housing search process is the decision-making process that a household embarks on to find a suitable dwelling space (Pickvance & Pickvance, 1994). The length of the search process is contingent on the market conditions; if housing costs are high, shortage in vacant housing units, and discriminatory practices are present, the search process will be lengthened (Ondrich, Stricer, and Yinger, 1999; Wheaton 1990). Furthermore, access to local housing information is pertinent to finding desired housing; hence, a less connected immigrant is at a disadvantage for seeking out the more beneficial deals and availabilities known to local residents (Teixeira, 2008).

Location decisions are mainly led by personal choice; for instance, it is common practice for individuals to choose to live closer to their place of employment to reduce commuting time (Quigley, 1985). Therefore, this trend can eventually lead to individuals or families with similar socio-economic backgrounds residing in the same area. The life-stage of a family is also significant when households choose a residence. Thus, people with similar family size tend to want to live in the same areas (Ellen & Turner 1997; Bartel, 1989; Erbe, 1975). Moreover, even though many may choose to concentrate by preference, some may do so due to exclusion (Clark & Dieleman, 1996; Dubofsky, 1968).

However, the strategies immigrants use in the housing search process and how they adapt to barriers have implications for a community (Murdie, 2003; Cutler, Glaeser, & Vigdor, 2008; Özüekren and Kempen, 2002). In support of this claim, studies have shown that success in the search for adequate and affordable housing is one of the most significant steps for successful integration into a community (Teixeira 2008; Murdie 2003).

### *Outcome of the Housing Search Process*

Housing evaluation can be assessed in two parts; the first part is the satisfaction the physical shelter provides in regards to affordability, adequacy, and suitability. The second part of the evaluation is a comparison to a household's previous housing unit and the occupants' sense of belonging to the community (Murdie, Chambon, Hulchanski & Teixeira, 1999; Murdie 2003).

The concentration of immigrant groups provides a foundation for a strong social network and support structure (Van Kempen & Özüekren, 1998). For instance, immigrants who come from collectivistic societies might have a harder time understanding western culture, which tends to be more individualistic in nature. Self-independence, an admired trait in the western world, is usually seen as being self-centered to someone from a collective society (Greif, 1994).

Collectivist cultures emphasize the need for community and stress family and group needs above individual needs. Therefore, living around immigrants who have the same cultural norms and ethnic identity and who therefore might be more appealing emphasizes the notion of cultural affinity (Espenshade & Hempstead, 1996; Greif, 1994; Van Kempen & Özüekren, 1998).

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter reviewed the migration shift rural America has been experiencing over the past few decades. Moreover, the ideas on how to retool rural America was presented; immigrants being a potential solution to the depopulation problem was discussed. An overview of Hispanic immigrants in Finney County, and in the United States was introduced. Lastly, the housing career framework (Murdie, 2002) was assessed, pointing out the various potential factors affecting the housing career of an immigrant.

### **Chapter 3 – Methodology**

On either a macro or a micro level, numerous elements could influence the housing experiences of a Hispanic immigrant in Finney County, KS; therefore, this study will employ an explorative case study to capture the dynamics. The study will assess their housing needs, the community resources they depend on, and the barriers that they encounter. This chapter lays out the research approach, research questions, setting, participant selection, data collection, and the steps for data analysis.

#### **Research Approach**

A case study is a qualitative inquiry where the researcher explores a single or multiple bounded systems over time, collecting in-depth data from many sources of information (Creswell, 2007). A case study design is warranted in the following circumstances: (a) a study's aim is to answer "how" and "why" questions; (b) the researcher is unable to manipulate the behavior of the participants; (c) covering contextual conditions is deemed necessary by the researcher due to their relevance to the phenomenon under study; or (d) the boundaries are vague between the phenomenon and its context (Baxter & Jack, 2008 p. 545). Given the reasons listed above, an exploratory case study was deemed the best fit for this particular study.

After the case researcher decides the approach is suitable, there are steps to follow. A case study becomes an acceptable methodology when the investigator has, "clearly identifiable cases with boundaries" and pursues deeper understanding of the subject. (Creswell, 2007 p.74). Then, the researcher must determine whether to assess a single case study or multiple cases. The value of theory development in selecting cases could also be pertinent. Given these parameters, data collection could be an extensive process. Hence, studies rely on multiple types of information such as interviews, surveys, observation, document analysis, and archival records to



help answer the research questions. However, importantly, research methodologists do not agree unanimously on the design and execution of a case study; therefore, the researcher would need to decide and justify the path that best fits the study (Yin, 2014; Stake 1995 & Merriam 1998).

The main concern regarding case study has been the quality of data collected. In particular, critics of this methodology have pointed out some biases associated with the data collected via interview or survey. For instance, Recall Bias may exist in research designs where participants are asked to recall past experiences (Hassan, 2006). Memory is expected to diminish overtime; therefore, the accuracy of the information given by participants might be in question. The further back in their memory the participants are asked to go, the more challenging it might become to produce accurate information. This would threaten the inherent validity of the data (Trochim & Donnelly, 2001). Even though it would not be possible to eliminate recall bias from the study, the research design could take measures to mitigate it such as clearly defining and conveying interview questions, carefully drafting the interview questions, and paying close attention to effective interviewing technique or style (Hassan, 2006; Yin, 2014; Trochim & Donnelly, 2001).

Moreover, other bias concerns are associated with a case study. Selection bias, which refers to picking participants that are not suitable for the study, is a noteworthy error. Additionally, interviewer bias, where the interviewer's personal views influence the participant's answers could become an obstacle. Also, more visible attributes of the researcher such as age, gender, or race can influence the participants (Hassan, 2006; Yin, 2014; Stake, 1995, Trochim & Donnelly, 2001). Therefore, the researcher would need to pursue the study objectives fully aware of the potential obstacles (Yin, 2014).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to explore the cultural experiences of Hispanic immigrants in a rural US community in regards to being integrated into the local housing community. Therefore, the study addresses the following research questions:

#### *Research Questions*

1. To investigate Hispanic immigrants' experiences of being integrated into rural community in Kansas?
2. To identify how rural Hispanic immigrants negotiate their residency status in the US in terms of seeking and obtaining housing?
3. To identify challenges and opportunities that rural Hispanic immigrants face in terms of being integrated into their local housing community?

### **Study Target Area**

This section identifies the geographic site in which the immigrants reside and are studied.

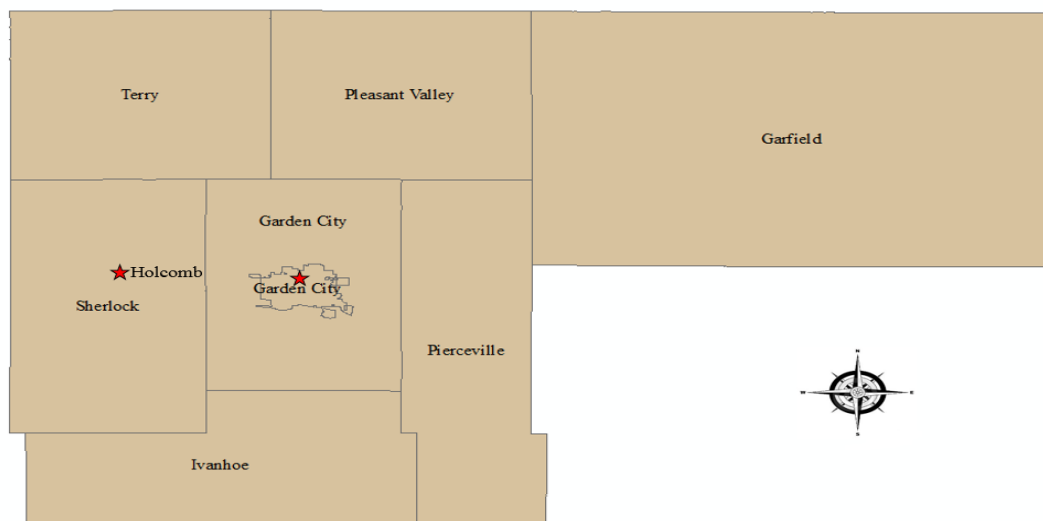
#### *Finney County*

With a land area of 1,302 square miles, Finney County is the second largest county in Kansas (Figure 5). As of 2016, according to the ACS, the population estimate was 36,722 with a median age of 30.5. The County seat, Garden City, is the most populous city with a population of 26,747, and the neighboring city of Holcomb comes in a distant second with a population of 2,094. The county's economy consists mainly of farming, ranching, and manufacturing. According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Economic Research Service, Finney County specializes in manufacturing, a fact supported by Tyson Foods, Inc. having a large plant in Holcomb (Figure 6), and seven miles from Garden City.



**Figure 5.** Map of Kansas identifying location of Finney County, Kansas

Data Source: <https://www.census.gov/cgi-bin/geo/shapefiles/index.php>



**Figure 6.** Map of Finney County, KS identifying the location of Garden City and Holcomb

Data Source: <https://www.census.gov/cgi-bin/geo/shapefiles/index.php>

## **Study Participant**

Drawing from previous housing career research, this study used a combination of snowball sampling and convenience sampling to recruit participants (Moore, 2003; Murdie, 2003; Murdie 2002). Given the purpose of this study was primarily explorative and qualitative, snowball sampling was beneficial (Hendricks, Blanken & Adriaans, 1992). Snowball or chain sampling is a technique where one participant gives the name of another potential participant who in turn provides another name (Vogt, 1999; Coyne, 1997). The method is supported by the premise that a ‘link’ exists between the initial contact and others in a target population with similar demographics (Berg, 1988).

Snowball sampling can be suitable for two main reasons. First, it can be an informal technique to gain access to a target population that yields information derived primarily from interviews (Atkinson & Flint, 2001). Secondly, snowball sampling could be used as a formal methodology in regards to making inquiries about individuals who are found, “outside the mainstream social reach,” who would be challenging to reach through household surveys and the like (Faugier and Sergeant, 1997; Atkinson & Flint, 2001 p.4). However, the technique has its disadvantages. For instance, the potential similarities within a particular social web may lead to circumstances where ‘isolates’ are overlooked (Atkinson & Flint, 2001; Van Meter, 1990). Also, because snowball sampling does not pull from randomly drawn samples, but relies on chain referrals, the samples are expected to be biased. Therefore, scientific generalizations could not be formed to explain the broader population.

Convenience Sampling, which is also called availability sampling or Haphazard Sampling, is also a non-probability technique to select the subjects most accessible to the researcher in the community. The underlying premise of the method is to assume that the

population is homogeneous (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). Therefore, due to the inherent sampling bias, the researcher would not have collected a sample representative of the population; hence, no generalizations to the larger population could be formed from the study results (Marsall, 1996). However, Convenience sampling could be an inexpensive and expedient way to gain access to the targeted population (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016).

#### *Individual Hispanic participants*

The criteria for selecting participants were the following: must be a Hispanic immigrant between the ages of 18 and 65, must have moved to Finney County, KS between 1996 and 2012, must have made at least two moves, and must have lived in a rental unit at least once. The next consideration is data saturation, which has been reached in previous studies with 20 participants (Fusch, & Ness, 2015; Shio, 2006). In this study, data saturation was reached after interviewing 25 participants. To avoid over selecting participants with similar backgrounds, the researcher was strategic in contacting various organizations that served various population needs in the community. The organizations contacted where participants were recruited are Garden City Community College English as a Second Language program, Hispanic American Leadership Organization (HALO), United Methodist Mexican American Ministries, varied churches, and K-State Research Extension.

Simultaneously, recruitment was attempted using public invitation flyers in English and Spanish displayed throughout the community, calling for volunteers. The flyer stated the purpose of the research, the requirements to qualify for the study, indicated \$10 compensation for each participant, clarified the interview to be 45- 60 Minutes and offered a local number to contact if interested in the study. Flyers were systematically placed in areas frequented by Hispanic immigrants such as Hispanic grocery stores, Hispanic restaurants, churches, apartment buildings,

Immigration attorney office, notary office, GCCC, and community center. Permission was requested and approved to post flyers in all listed establishments, some of which required modest fees to keep the flyers displayed for the full three weeks. Also, 200 flyers were dispersed throughout the community. Despite the public invitation of displaying flyers being useful in past studies, it did not produce any results in this particular study.

However, establishing a connection with various trusted community leaders was essential in recruiting participants for the study. Community leaders such as community organizers, educators, and community elders provided the researcher a solid platform where potential participants could be made aware of the research. For example, the researcher was invited by educators to Garden City Community College (GCCC) to give short presentations establishing the purpose of the research to students and thereby recruit interested volunteers. Presentations were given to ESL classes and a HALO member meeting. The presentation for the ESL sessions was conducted in English with a Spanish translator. After the presentation, a signup sheet was passed around to provide the students an opportunity to sign up. While the HALO participants were typically college-age, the participants from the ESL sessions were adult students in their 30's and 40's attending ESL sessions 2-4 times a week; this registers a commitment to improving their English. Overall, eight participants were recruited through GCCC, six through K-State Research Extension, and two through connections with the United Methodist Mexican-American Ministries. Also, with the assistance of community elders, three business owners were recruited for the study. Finally, snowball sampling was utilized to recruit the remaining six participants.

The participants who signed up during the presentations received a follow-up phone call to set up an interview time. Also, other participants introduced to the researcher by community

leaders were contacted via phone or an email (Appendix A). To establish familiarity and trust with the participant, the researcher took ample time before each interview to explain the purpose of the research and the researcher's personal interest in the subject. However, to avoid any influence over the participant's future answers, the researcher was cautious not to anticipate and state possible research conclusions and only expressed curiosity in the study. All participants were encouraged to speak freely since their stories could be a vital contribution to improving the housing career of Hispanic Immigrants in Finney County, KS. Additionally, this study is human subject research, so it was overseen by Kansas State University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). Therefore, to fulfill parts of the requirements for the IRB, the participants were given enough time to read and sign the Consent Form (Appendix B), after thoroughly exhausting any questions they might have had regarding the Consent Form or the research.

Each participant was given the option to be interviewed in English or Spanish. Ultimately, 14 participants preferred to be interviewed in Spanish, while 11 chose to be interviewed in English. The English interviews were conducted by the researcher, and the Spanish interviews were conducted by two well-trained Spanish interviewers in the presence of the researcher. The interviews were conducted on the GCCC campus, in the AmericInn Lodge & Suites conference room, and in a few participant homes. After the interview was conducted, each participant received \$10 for participating and a personalized thank you card. Also, invitation flyers and business cards were given to the participants to take home, in case they wanted to refer a friend or acquaintance who qualified for the study.

### **Membership Role**

The researcher decided to take a peripheral role in this study. A peripheral member role (PMR) is more of a marginal role, where researchers nevertheless acknowledge that some form

of membership is needed. Therefore, they search for an insider's perspective on the group of people to be studied (Adler & Adler, 1987). The researcher, being an immigrant and having lived in the United States over ten years, may have relatability with the participants, and if so, such personal familiarity would allow easier access to people within the community (Adler & Adler, 1987). However, since the researcher is not Hispanic and does not speak Spanish, the cultural and language differences could have been an obstacle. Therefore, taking a PMR role could enable the researcher to seek to develop close relationships with the informants allowing the researcher to develop trust and acceptance in the community (Marquate, 1983). As it happened, having trained Spanish interviewers conducting the interviews in Spanish assisted in bridging any potential cultural divide if interviews had been conducted by a non-Hispanic interviewer. The researcher's subjectivity is addressed in Appendix C.

### **Data Collection: Interviews**

An effective interview depends on the communication skills of the interviewer (Colugh & Manion, 2007). The ability to listen carefully, pause or inquire when needed, and encourage the participant to speak without restrictions is vital to gathering rich data (Colugh & Manion, 2007; Opie & Sikes, 2004; Ritchie & Lewis 2003). Moreover, interviews provide the researcher the chance to uncover pertinent information that may not be accessible with other techniques (Blaxter, 2006). Furthermore, this type of data collection can be recorded, which allows the researcher to review the material several times, thus increasing the chance of producing an accurate report (Berg & Lune, 2004). For this study, based on previously conducted research (Mundie, Chambon, Hulchanski & Teixeira, 1999; Murdie, 2002; Shio, 2006), the standardized interview questions were structured using the housing career model and



divided into five distinctive sections to capture the different drivers that affect the housing experience of an immigrant. The following are the interview questions:

**1. Housing and household characteristics?**

- a) What kind of place do you live in? (Apartment, single family home, mobile home)
- b) Do you rent or own?
- c) What is the gross monthly rent or mortgage?
- d) How many bedrooms and bathrooms are in your housing unit?
- e) How many people live in your housing unit?
- f) Describe the current housing situation you live in?
- g) Describe your monthly housing costs, as it relates to your current financial situation?

**2. Demographic characteristics**

- a) What is your age?
- b) Where were you born?
- c) What is your familial status? (Married, widowed, divorced, single)
- d) How many children do you have?
- e) What is your level of education?
- f) What is your spouse's level of education?
- g) Are you employed? If so, where?
- h) Is your spouse employed? If so, where?
- i) Do you or your spouse have more than one job?
- j) What is the range of your monthly household income?

**3. Housing history and satisfaction with previous housing?**

- a) How long have you lived in the United States?

- b) Did you live in another city or state before coming to Finney County, KS? If so, where?
- c) What steps do you take when looking for a housing unit?
- d) What do you look for in a housing unit when you're planning to move?
- e) How many times have you moved since you arrived in Finney County, KS? If yes, what were the reasons for each move?
- f) Describe your previous housing units?
- g) What part of town were your previous housing units?
- h) What was the length of your search to find each housing unit?
- i) Have you been homeless since you have moved to the Finney County, KS?
- j) Tell me about any problems you faced when searching for housing?
- k) Have you ever been shown a housing unit by a landlord and later denied? If so, can you tell me about your experience?
- l) Has your ethnicity impacted your search for housing? If yes, explain.

**4. Perception of the neighborhood as a social and physical environment**

- a) Tell me the reasons you choose to live in your current neighborhood?
- b) How would you describe the level of safety of your neighborhood?
- c) What kind of extra measures do you take to ensure your safety?
- d) Have you experienced any racial discrimination in your current neighborhood? If yes, please describe.
- e) Have you seen other immigrant groups be discriminated against in your neighborhood? If yes, explain.

## **5. Housing opportunities and constraints**

- a) Has your immigration status impacted your search for housing in Finney County? If yes, explain.
  - 1. What steps do you take when your immigration status impacts your search for housing?
- b) What housing assistance opportunities are you aware of?
- c) Have you received any housing assistance? What kind?
- d) What kind of housing assistance do you currently need? (e.g., credit counseling, affordable housing options, down payment assistance, housing search)
- e) Have you received any housing assistance from a not for profit organization? (e.g., church)
- f) Tell me about the ways you have seen Hispanic immigrant group respond to housing challenges in Finney County, KS?
- g) What kind of action would you like to see from community leaders in terms of housing in Finney County, KS?

These questions reflect standardized open-ended interviews, which are specifically structured, and participants are always asked the same questions; moreover, the questions are phrased so the responses are open-ended (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003). This form of interview is the most common form used in research as it allows the participants to contribute as much in-depth information as they choose (Creswell, 2007). However, the researcher must be cautious not to reinforce the participant's responses, positively or negatively, to avoid inserting any response-controlling mechanism (Seidman, 1991). Therefore, the questions for the standardized open-ended interview were drafted using past studies as a guide, specifically focusing on what would be relevant to Finney County, KS (Murdie, 2002, Shio 2006).

## **Data Management**

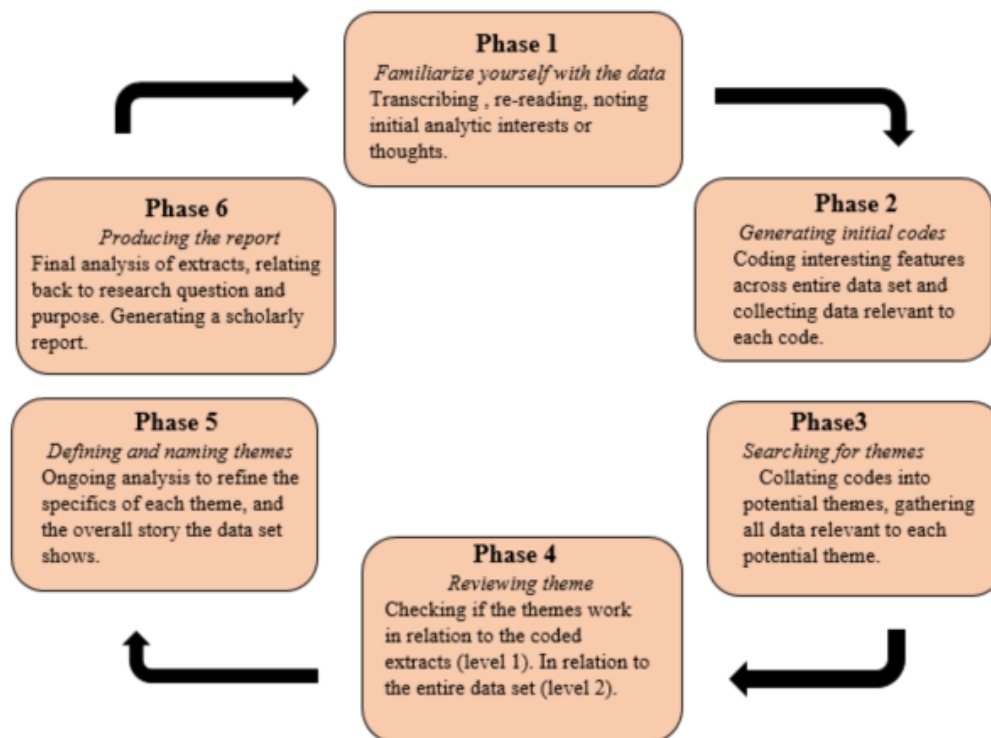
Data management involved both printed and digital data, and so backing up data for future access was key in the plan for data management. Data was backed up using four devices. First, MP3 files of each interview audio recordings were uploaded on Microsoft OneDrive at the end of each interview day. As a precaution, once the field work was complete, copies of all audio recordings of the interviews were made and stored on a secured password protected laptop. Second, backup copies were made and stored on a USB and an external drive, which then were placed in a secure file cabinet. After a participant had confirmed that they were interested in being interviewed, they were assigned a pseudonym immediately. Third, the transcribed data in English and Spanish were all organized by each participant's pseudonym, and stored in a secure file cabinet and on a password protected laptop. Fourth, the researcher purchased a burner phone with a 620 area code, a local number, for the duration of the research. Having a local number was helpful when trying to reach locals; a nonlocal number could suggest a telemarketer or a bill collector, therefore discouraging people from answering their phones. On the other hand, a bonus of a burner phone was to protect the participant's identity since burner phones are disposable; accordingly, after the study was completed, the phone was disposed of, and the line was discontinued.

## **Data Analysis**

The processes of data analysis and interpretation of the collected data should revolve around a well-organized study, creative awareness, and detailed attention to the evaluation process (Patton, 2002). Also, importantly, researchers state that data analysis is a significantly difficult aspect of qualitative research (Taylor & Bogdan, 2015). Nevertheless, thorough data

analysis is vital to accurately reflect the experience of participants as this process may shed light on a participant's core experience.

So, to stay true to the path of discovery, this study follows a thematic analysis that has six phases as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006) in Figure 7. Thematic analysis is a method of recognizing, analyzing and identifying patterns and themes within a qualitative data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In the following section, the six phases are explained following Figure 7, which identifies them.



**Figure 7.** Thematic Analysis Process, Braun & Clarke (2006)

Phase one: Familiarizing oneself with data. This step is vital in all types of qualitative analysis. Thus, this phase requires the researcher to dig deep in the data collected by reading and re-reading transcripts. Transcribing interviews, and double checking for accuracy is a key step in

this process (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Therefore, each audio transcribed was reviewed at least once to eliminate any human errors.

Phase two: Generating initial codes. For this study, the first cycle of coding for the transcript was Initial Coding, which is suggested as a starting point to help uncover the ideal direction of the study (Saldana, 2009). Initial Coding breaks down data into different parts that the researcher would need to carefully evaluate and assess for similarities and differences (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The codes in Initial Coding are all, “tentative and provisional” (Saldana, 2009, p. 81).

Phase three: Searching for themes. Braun and Clarke (2006) state that this phase should focus on the broader level of themes, and less on codes. A theme is a, “coherent and meaningful pattern in the data relevant to the research question” (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 2). This study for the Second Cycle coding method used the Pattern Coding technique, which is useful after initial coding to identify a theme (Saldana, 2009).

Phase four: Reviewing themes. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), this phase is divided into two steps. The first step entails reviewing each coded segment of data for any coherent patterns. If a theme does not meet expected standards, it should be reworked to create a new theme or be combined into another existing theme. The second step involves a similar process but involves the entire data set. At this stage, the researcher should carefully study the validity of individual themes in regards to the data set. Also, the researcher would need to double check that the thematic map accurately represents the meaning shown in the data set as a whole.

Phase five: Defining and naming themes. This phase includes fine-tuning the themes by identifying the core message of each. The researcher would be required to write a thorough analysis of each theme to see where each fits when evaluating the whole story. Discovering the

relations of codes and themes in this study is important before advancing to the interpretive phase (Fereday & Cochrane, 2006).

**Phase 6: Producing the Results.** The final step is writing up the summary of the research findings (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Yin, 2009; Stake, 2006). In this phase, the researcher should revisit the research purpose and questions and then proceed to tell the story of each participant's experience through the themes discovered. After the summary for each participant is complete, the researcher is expected to begin a cross-case analysis, looking for similarities and differences across participant experiences.

### **Reciprocity and Ethics**

Each participant was compensated \$10 for participating in the study. Also, the result of the study will be available to all participants if they want to read the final research study. Additionally, the study will be freely shared with local city planners and officials who make daily policy decisions that affect immigrant households. For instance, the American Planning Association has a notable division called the Latinos and Planning Division. This study intends to share its findings with such organizations that could promote awareness. The best way to honor the participants' experience is by sharing their challenges with organizations that could better people's lives.

The study anticipates few ethical dilemmas. If an immigrant being interviewed was undocumented at one point or has family members that are currently undocumented, that raises ethical issues for the researcher. However, since the duty of the researcher is to keep the confidentiality of all participants, the researcher was bound to protect their information. Moreover, extra precautions would need to be taken when analyzing all parcel unit data. Therefore, the study reports only a range of how much the housing units are worth, and any

identifiers were excluded. This is necessary because too much specificity could threaten participant anonymity since it would take a trained professional only a short amount of time to do a query search and narrow down potential households.

### **Trustworthiness and Rigor**

Validity and reliability are of particular importance in research as careful attention to these two concepts will increase the chances of the research community accepting findings as credible and trustworthy (Golafshani, 2003). In the qualitative study, the researcher's subjectivity has the potential to influence the interpretation of the data (Brink, 1993; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2014). Therefore, it is essential to be aware of the numerous factors that can threaten the validity of findings. Also, the researcher has to be vigilant in forming strategies to address validity and reliability concerns.

According to Brink (1993), a critical factor affecting validity and reliability is an error; the greater the error present, given various findings of the research, the less accurate and truthful the results will be. The primary sources of error are the following: (1) the researcher; (2) the subjects participating in the project; (3) the situation or social context; and (4) the methods of data collection and analysis. The trustworthiness of qualitative data can be established using four criteria: Credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

As noted earlier, recall bias could become an obstacle when participants are asked to recall past experiences (Hassan, 2006). Also, collecting data in Spanish and presenting the findings in English would have an impact on the validity of the data. This study took the utmost precaution by having trained English and Spanish interviewers and trained translators collecting and handling data. Spanish is a Romance language, while English is a Germanic language. Thus, numerous differences exist between the two languages in their pronunciation of words and even



grammar structure (Bernstein, 1997). Due to the obvious language barriers, there was some difficulty in translating all the data with complete accuracy. For example, some Spanish idioms or catch phrases don't translate well into the English language.

Additionally, various strategies were used to improve the study, such as peer debriefing. Peer debriefing is a process where the researcher's peers shed light and explore aspects of the inquiry the researcher might have overlooked or point out biases that have been taken for granted (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Also, the researcher conducted informal member checks. Member checks are when data, categories, explanations, and conclusions are tested with the participants; this technique is viewed as establishing the validity of an account (Sandelowski, 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Some researchers also use triangulation as a method to test for validity. Triangulation is the use of multiple data sources in a study to produce a deeper understanding (Patton, 1999). This study did access archival records to deepen the understanding of home values of participants. Lastly, many researchers recommend having a research journal (Denzin, 1994; Lather, 1991; MacNaughton, 2001). Having a reflective journal allowed for methodological rigor. Furthermore, keeping such a journal allowed the researcher to maintain an account of current experiences, and interpretation process, creating transparency in the study (Ortlipp, 2008).

## **Chapter Summary**

This chapter lays out the qualitative methodological approach for addressing the research questions presented in Chapter One. Furthermore, the study site, participant selection, membership role, data collection, data management, and the steps for data analysis was presented. Lastly, this study emphasized the need for trustworthiness and rigor.

## **Chapter 4 – Findings**

The purpose of this study was to explore the cultural experiences of Hispanic immigrants in Finney County in regards to their being integrated into the local housing community. This section first lays out the general findings guided by the housing career model explained in Chapter Two. Then the chapter explains the data analysis strategy in this study before answering the research questions. The chapter concludes by discussing the themes this study identifies.

### *Household Characteristics, Preferences, and Resources*

The interviews conducted retrieved various information about the participants such as socio-economic status, family status and life-style, English language proficiency, immigration status, housing preference, neighborhoods, household size, and length of stay in the United States and Finney County in particular.

To better understand the individual participants in this study, this section first discusses their general characteristics. As Table 3 shows, from the total of 25 participants, 80% were from Mexico, and 20% were from other Hispanic countries such as The Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, or Honduras. Next, Figure 8 shows the Central American and Caribbean Island map. Notably, from the 80% who were from Mexico, eight participants were from Chihuahua, Mexico, and seven participants were from Zacatecas, Mexico. As Figure 9 shows, Chihuahua, Mexico is a border state with the United States, and it also happens to be Mexico's largest state. Meanwhile, Zacatecas, Mexico, is located toward the center of Mexico, and the participants indicated it is known mainly for agriculture.

Case #	Country of Origin	Sex	Age	Marital Status	Child- ren	Education	Spouse Education	English Proficiency	Occupation	Spouse Occupation
1	Chihuahua, Mexico	Female	47	Divorced	3	1 year of College KS		Good	Self-employed	
2	Jalisco, Mexico	Female	47	Widowed	4	2 years of College KS		Good	Executive Assistant	
3	Chihuahua, Mexico	Female	18	Single	0	College Student KS		Good	Food Industry	
4	Jalisco, Mexico	Male	19	Single	0	College Student KS		Good	Receptionist	
5	Guatemala	Female	32	Married	2	First Grade Guatemala	First Grade Guatemala	Poor	Meat Packing Plant	Meat Packing Plant
6	Zacatecas, Mexico	Female	51	Married	3	Some College KS	10th Grade Mexico	Poor	Day Care	Government Worker
7	Zacatecas, Mexico	Female	43	Single	3	9th Grade Mexico		Poor	Food Industry	
8	Chihuahua, Mexico	Female	51	Single	1	Nursing School KS		Good	Nurse	
9	Honduras	Female	56	Divorced	2	College Honduras		Poor	Accountant	
10	En Michoacán, Mexico	Female	42	Married	3	6th Grade Mexico	12th Grade in Mexico	Poor	Housekeeper	Meat Packing Plant
11	Dominican Republic (DR)	Female	42	Married	2	2nd Grade DR	College USA	Poor	Factory Worker	Government Worker
12	Guanajuato, Mexico	Female	70	Married	4	4th Grade Mexico	None	Poor	Homemaker	Pensioned
13	Zacatecas, Mexico	Male	40	Married	3	9th Grade Mexico	Middleschool Mexico	Good	Self-employed	Homemaker
14	Chihuahua, Mexico	Female	41	Married	1	GED	9th Grade Mexico	Good	Housekeeper	Feed Yard
15	Zacatecas, Mexico	Female	39	Married	4	Some College KS	8th Grade Mexico	Good	Homemaker	Feed Yard
16	Zacatecas, Mexico	Female	29	Single	0	2 Bachelors KS		Good	Teacher	
17	Zacatecas, Mexico	Male	41	Married	5	8th Grade Mexico	6th Grade Mexico	Poor	Disability	Homemaker
18	Chihuahua, Mexico	Female	21	Married	1	College Student	College Student	Good	Executive Assistant	Construction
19	Pano Veracruz, Mexico	Female	38	Single	4	12th Grade in Mexico		Poor	Homemaker	
20	Zacatecas, Mexico	Female	55	Married	3	6th Grade Mexico	6th Grade Mexico	Poor	Food Industry	Meat Packing Plant
21	El Salvador	Female	62	Divorced	0	12th Grade El Salvado		Poor	Housekeeper	
22	El Salvador	Female	65	Widowed	1	Some College KS		Poor	Church Assistant	
23	Chihuahua, Mexico	Female	24	Married	0	12th Grade Mexico	Trade Certificate KS	Poor	Homemaker	Self-employed
24	Chihuahua, Mexico	Male	51	Married	2	6th Grade Mexico	6th Grade Mexico	Poor	Feed Yard	Homemaker
25	Chihuahua, Mexico	Male	38	Married	2	12th Grade Mexico	12th Grade Mexico	Poor	Government	Homemaker

**Table 3.** Demographic Characteristics



**Figure 8.** Map of Central America and Caribbean Islands

Source: <http://www.globalcitymap.com>



The mean age of the participants was 42.5 with a range from 18 to 70 years. Notably, of the 25 participants, 20 were female, and five were male. Furthermore, 14 participants were married, six were single, three were divorced, and two were widowed. The average number of children per participant was two. Next, as a group, few pursued higher education. Only three individuals reported having graduated from college while five participants indicated they had attended one to two years of college before dropping out, and three are currently college students. Four participants finished high school while three completed the ninth grade, and the remaining seven participants had an eighth grade or lower education.

The majority of the participants had poor English proficiency as determined by the following: if a participant spoke English well enough to have had the interview conducted in English, English proficiency was marked as 'good.' However, if the interview was conducted in Spanish, the English proficiency was marked 'poor.' Consequently, 14 of the participants had poor English proficiency while 11 had good English proficiency. Also, as Table 4 shows, the average number of years the participants lived in Finney County was 13.8, while the average number of years they lived in the United States was 16.8.

Case #	Years in Finney	Total Years in USA	Did you have to live with family/friends on arrival?	Have you lived in a mobile home?	Number of Moves in Finney	Longest search for a living space in Finney	Help from NGO?	Have you received housing assistance?	Do you know of any housing assistance options?	Have you faced discrimination?	Have you seen other Immigrant groups face discrimination?
1	15	20	Yes	No	3	2 Months	No	No	No	No	Yes
2	13	20	No	No	3	1 Year	No	No	No	No	No
3	16	16	Yes	Yes	3	1 Year	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
4	12	14	Yes	Yes	2	2 Months	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
5	16	16	Yes	No	2	5 Months	No	No	No	No	No
6	10	20	Yes	No	4	6 Months	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
7	13	16	Yes	Yes	2	2 Months	No	No	No	No	Yes
8	15	15	Yes	Yes	10	1 Year	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
9	13	14	No	Yes	3	1 Month	No	No	No	No	No
10	13	13	Yes	Yes	2	4 Years	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
11	13	13	No	No	2	2 Months	No	No	No	No	No
12	20	20	Yes	Yes	2	1 Year	No	No	No	No	No
13	9	20	Yes	Yes	3	1 Year	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
14	13	13	No	Yes	3	1 Year	No	No	No	No	Yes
15	10	15	No	Yes	2	6 Months	No	No	No	No	Yes
16	13	18	Yes	No	4	~ 1 Month	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
17	20	20	Yes	Yes	5	3 Months	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
18	15	17	Yes	Yes	2	1 Week	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
19	14	16	Yes	Yes	5	1 Year	No	No	No	No	No
20	19	19	Yes	Yes	4	6 Months	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
21	10	15	Yes	No	3	~ 1 Month	No	No	No	No	No
22	20	25	Yes	Yes	8	7 Months	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
23	6	6	Yes	No	3	1 Year	No	No	No	No	No
24	11	24	Yes	Yes	2	~1 Month	No	No	No	No	No
25	17	17	Yes	Yes	3	6 Months	No	No	No	No	Yes

**Table 4.** Housing History

Next, Table 5 presents monthly household income to capture a more in-depth look at each participant's financial capabilities of or limitations on affording housing. The average monthly income for the participants was \$2,511. Five participants had a monthly household income that was less than \$1,000, and 12 participants reported a monthly household income of

\$1,200- \$2,500. Three participants reported a monthly household income of \$2,500- \$3,500, while five participants had a monthly household income of \$4,000 -\$6,000.

Regarding employment, the participants worked in various sectors of the economy while four indicated having a more traditional role as homemakers. The male participants and the spouses of the female participants were mainly employed at the feed yard, meat packing plant, in government jobs, or were self-employed. However, comparing the participants' monthly household income, after factoring household size, the study shows 12 participants fell below the national poverty line provided by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment.

The most popular housing option among the participants was a single family home, where 15 individuals lived, while eight lived in mobile homes, and only two reported living in an apartment. Also, participants who lived in a single family home mainly preferred three bedrooms with one bath or four bedrooms with two bathrooms. However, for the mobile home residents, three bedrooms with two bathrooms was the popular option.

The participants didn't display a particular trend as to where they lived in Finney County as housing units were randomly located. However, some participants indicated safety concerns on the west side of town and indicated preferring not to live around there. In addition, some reported safety concerns around some mobile home parks located on the outskirts of Garden City. The gathering of gangs and the distribution of drugs are still concerns in those neighborhoods.



Case #	Monthly Household Income	Structure Type	Number of Bedrooms Bath	Household Size	Housing Condition	Tenure	Monthly Rent or Mortgage	Housing Cost Burden Ratio	Can you Afford?
1	6,000	Single Family Home	3BR 1BTH	3	Good	Own	\$900	15%	Yes
2	\$2,225	Single Family Home	4BR 2BTH	5	Good	Own	\$360	16%	No
3	\$4,000	Single Family Home	4BR 2BTH	5	Good	Own	\$750	19%	No
4	2,000	Mobile Home	2BR 2BTH	7	Good	Rent	\$230	12%	Yes
5	2,500	Single Family Home	4BR 2BTH	4	Good	Own	\$827	33%	Yes
6	2,400	Single Family Home	4BR 2BTH	2	Good	Own	\$350	15%	Yes
7	\$1,200	Mobile Home	3BR 2BTH	3	Poor	Rent	\$230	19%	No
8	2,000	Single Family Home	3BR 1BTH	2	Needs Repair	Rent	\$700	35%	No
9	1,000	Mobile Home	2BR 1BTH	2	Needs Repair	Rent	\$240	24%	Yes
10	\$3,000	Single Family Home	3BR 1BTH	7	Needs Repair	Rent	\$480	16%	No
11	2,000	Apartment	2BR 1BTH	2	Good	Rent	\$600	30%	Yes
12	\$950	Single Family Home	3BR 1BTH	2	Good	Borrowed	Free	0%	Yes
13	\$2,500	Single Family Home	5BR 2BTH	5	Needs Repair	Own	\$780	31%	Yes
14	\$2,800	Mobile Home	3BR 2BTH	3	Poor	Own	\$225	8%	Yes
15	2,900	Mobile Home	3BR 2BTH	6	Need Repair	Own	\$210	7%	No
16	6,000	Single Family Home	4BR 2BTH	6	Good	Rent	\$1,200	20%	No
17	1,200	Mobile Home	3BR 2BTH	6	Poor	Own	Own	0%	Yes
18	4,000	Apartment	2BR 2BTH	3	Needs Repair	Rent	\$600	15%	Yes
19	1,000	Mobile Home	3BR 2BTH	4	Good	Own	Own	0%	Yes
20	\$2,500	Single Family Home	4BR 2BTH	6	Good	Own	\$850	34%	No
21	\$500	Single Family Home	3BR 1BTH	2	Good	Rent Room	\$100	20%	Yes
22	\$900	Single Family Home	3BR 1BTH	2	Good	Own	\$268	30%	No
23	4,000	Single Family Home	3BR 1BTH	2	Needs Repair	Own	\$840	21%	No
24	\$1,800	Mobile Home	3BR 2BTH	3	Need Repair	Rent	\$210	12%	Yes
25	\$2,150	Single Family Home	3BR 2BTH	6	Need Repair	Rent	\$700	33%	No

**Table 5.** Housing Characteristics

### *Filters in the Housing Search Process*

This section includes housing system realities meaning housing stock and existing societal realities, which include race, ethnicity, class, and gender as socially constructed variables that affect housing for immigrants.

Regarding housing system realities, affordability was an issue among some participants. For example, participants living in a single family home had an average monthly

rent or mortgage of \$650, those in a mobile home had a monthly rent or mortgage of \$224, and the average monthly cost for the apartments was \$600. However, of the 14 participants who indicated that they could afford their housing expenses, three of them were shown to have a housing-cost burden ratio over 30%. Overall, seven participants had a housing-cost burden ratio over 30%. As Chapter Two explains, housing expenditures that surpass 30% of household income have been an indicator of lack of housing affordability; such a household is therefore classified as a burdened household. Interestingly, seven participants who indicated that they could not afford their housing unit had a housing cost burden ratio that was considerably lower than the 30% mark. However, regardless of not meeting the traditional 30% mark of a burdened household, such participants' financial constraints likely could be explained by their larger household size.

In regards to assessing existing societal realities, the participants were asked if they have experienced discrimination while searching for housing or while in their respective neighborhoods; 92% of the participants reported that they have not faced any discrimination while in Finney County; nevertheless, 60% reported that they had seen other immigrant groups mainly the Somalians and Burmese, discriminated against in that area. However, only two participants reported seeing Guatemalans and Mexicans from Oaxaca State being treated unfairly.

### *Housing Search Process*

The participants were asked their information source and strategies regarding their housing search process. Many participants noted that they struggled to find housing in Finney County. As Table 4 shows, the average longest search for a housing unit was 8.2 months, while the average number of moves was 3.4. In addition, the current housing shortage in the county

and the limited financial resources of most participants at the time of their arrival led 20 of the participants to live with their extended family or friends.

Furthermore, the information gap between the community and the resources available is demonstrated in Table 4. For example, 18 participants stated that they had no idea about local housing assistance programs. Of the seven participants who had burdened households, only two were aware of housing assistance options. Therefore, only 0.08% of the participants ever received any housing assistance while 28% reported having received some form of financial assistance from a nonprofit organization.

The participants indicated that their housing search is heavily reliant on word of mouth from friends and family, so clearly, social networks were vital in the search process.

#### *Outcome of the housing search process*

Lastly, the outcome of the housing search process can be clarified by addressing housing conditions and participant responses about the level of satisfaction. When participants were asked how they felt about the condition of their housing unit, 13 reported living in good housing conditions, nine stated they lived in a housing unit that needed some form of repair, and three participants indicated living in poor housing conditions. In addition, the average household size was four, and only one participant lived in crowded conditions at that time. However, the 20 participants who stated that they lived with family and friends upon arrival were all living in crowded conditions initially. Also, the majority of the participants were satisfied with their neighborhood; however, a few did raise concerns about safety. Ultimately, most participants had strong ties to their family and friends but were not aware of community resources.

The following section discusses the data analysis strategies in this study and offers a thorough documentation of the coding method.

### **Data Analysis Strategy**

Most notably, the data analysis for this study is inductive in nature, taking a bottom-up approach that is directly linked to the data set. On this basis, data was carefully, systematically, and objectively investigated.

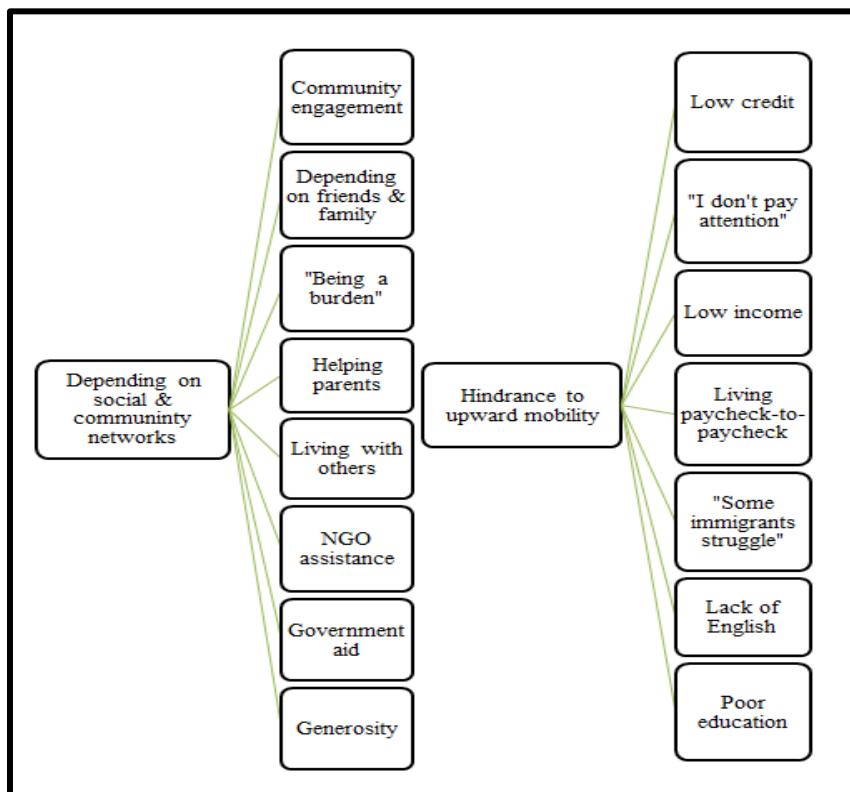
After in-person interviews, those conducted in English were transcribed using NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software. The interviews conducted in Spanish were transcribed using an online transcribing service called [transcribe.wreally.com](https://www.transcribe.wreally.com). Then, the data transcribed in Spanish were translated into English by a trained interpreter. With the aid of NVivo, the data were organized and further analyzed.

As discussed in Chapter three, the ontological research questions in this study were the guide for picking the first and second cycle coding methods. To help discover the direction of the study and reduce the researcher's bias, the first cycle coding was done using Initial Coding and In Vivo coding. The data were carefully examined to determine keywords and phrases that were common among the interviewees. Accordingly, the first cycle of coding identified 175 initial codes. As initial codes are provisional, further steps were taken to merge some codes when appropriate or remove codes all together if they were deemed irrelevant. Therefore, the initial codes were reduced to 78 codes before second cycle coding.

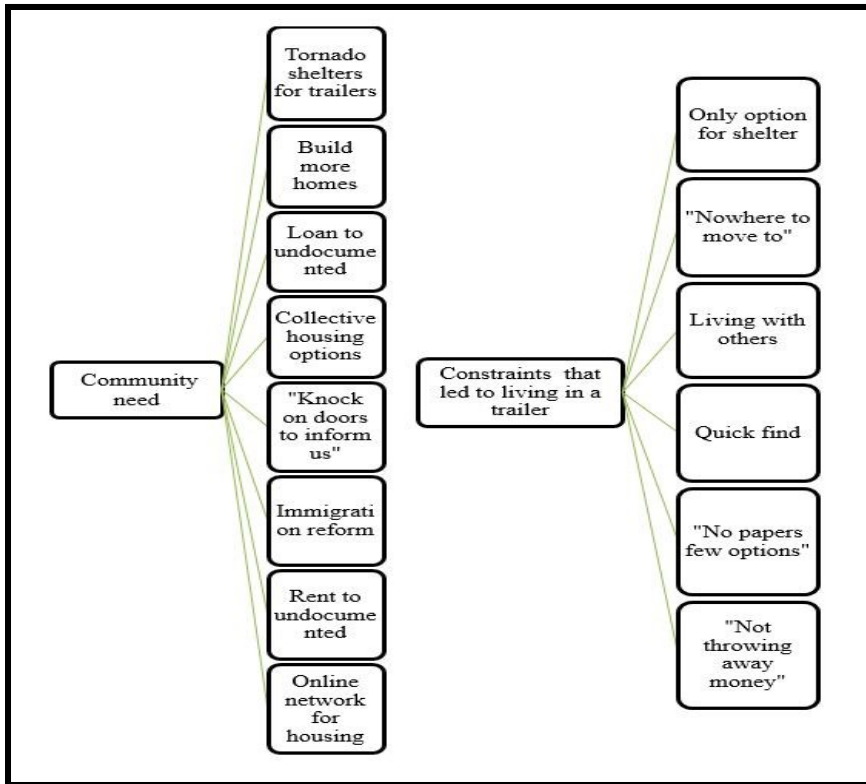
The second cycle coding method used the pattern coding technique. Pattern coding is useful after initial coding as it identifies similarly coded data to further categorize or consolidate it if necessary. This process provides the category labels with which to identify themes. Using pattern coding, the study identified 12 categories: dependence on social and community networks, obstacles to upward mobility, community need, constraints that led to living in a trailer, cultural influence, safety concerns, privilege, protecting the undocumented,

dissatisfaction with housing, satisfaction with housing, negative perception of other immigrants, and pull and push factors. Appendix D shows further definition of codes under each category.

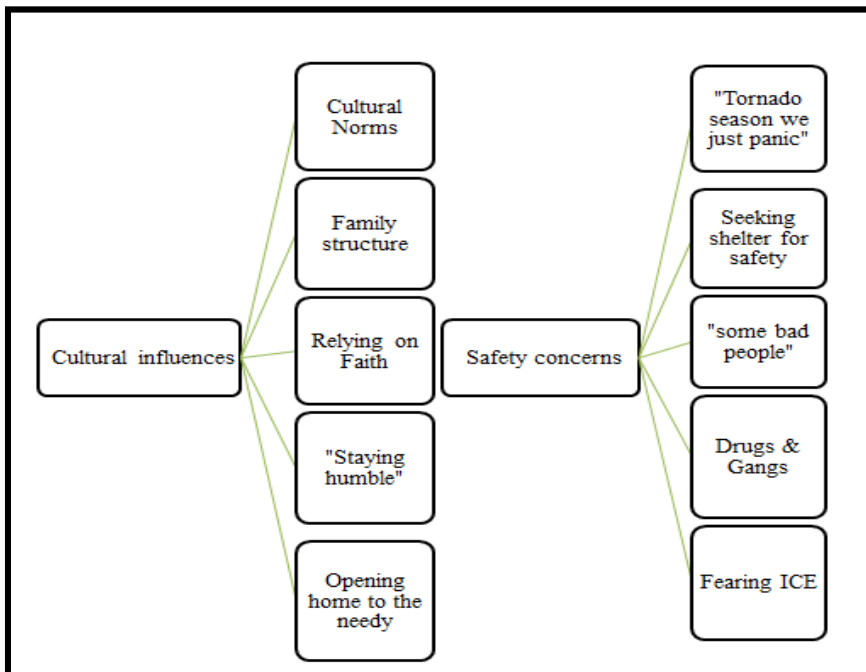
The following section provides the reader a thorough account of the pattern coding process in a detailed visual account in Figures 10 to 15.



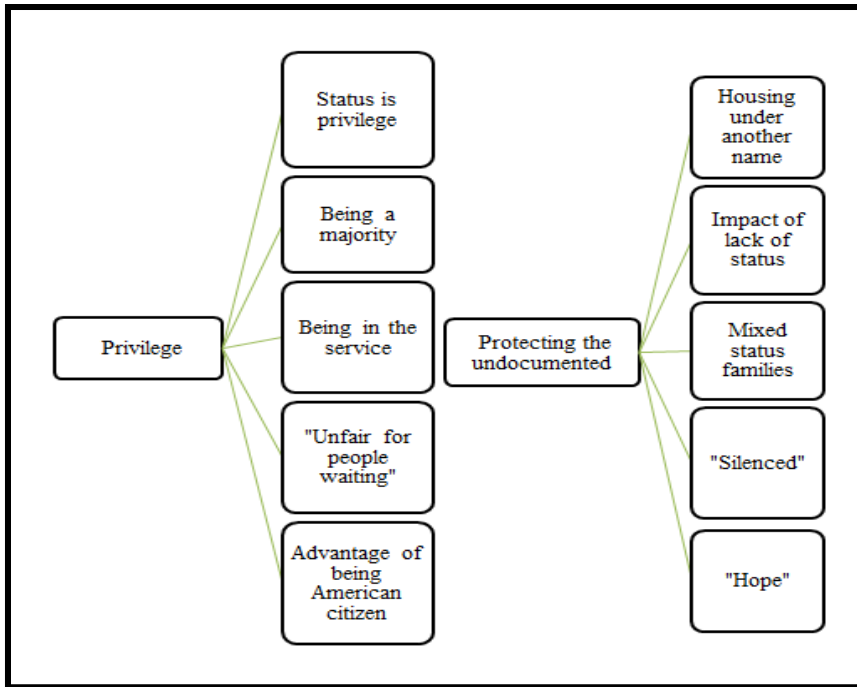
**Figure 10.** Pattern Codes: Networks and Mobility



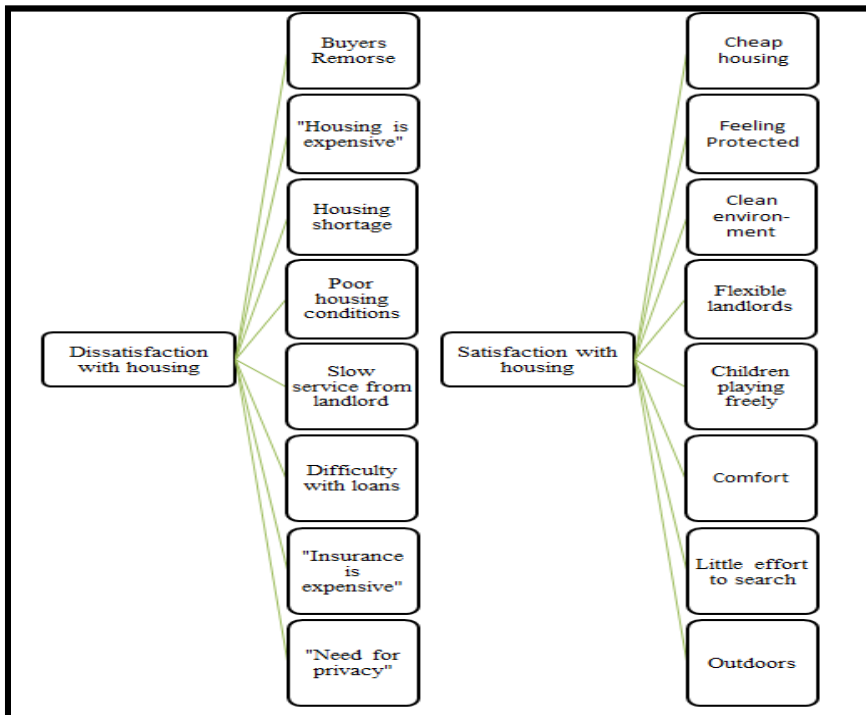
**Figure 11.** Pattern Codes: Needs and Constraints



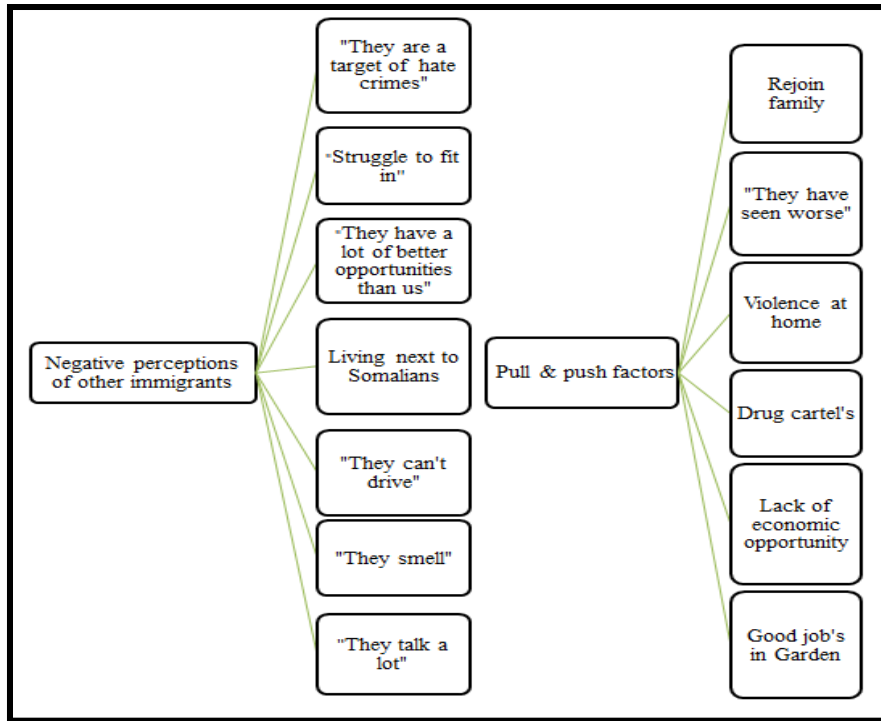
**Figure 12.** Pattern Codes: Culture and Safety



**Figure 13.** Pattern Codes: Privilege and Protection



**Figure 14.** Pattern Codes: Dissatisfaction and Satisfaction



**Figure 15.** Pattern Codes: Perceptions and Migration

The following section answers the research questions presented in Chapter One.

*Research Question No.1:*

What are Hispanic immigrants' experiences of being integrated into a rural US community in Kansas?

Many participants explained the significant role extended family and friends played in their integration into the community. As Table 4. shows, 76% of the participants indicated they had to live with extended family or friends upon arrival, almost all in crowded conditions. Many attributed it to financial constraints; others stated housing shortage as the reason for such an arrangement. For example, here are five participants explaining their initial integration into the community.



**Salome:**

When we first moved here, [for] the very first apartment, we just moved to the apartment my dad was living in because he was already living here for several years; unfortunately, it was a very small apartment. It was a two-bedroom apartment. He was sharing it already with two cousins. So at one point, there were eight people living in a two-bedroom apartment. Including four kids!

**Geronimo:**

When I first got here, I got here with my wife, and she had a brother here. The brother lived with another family, and we stayed there while we looked for a place. [This was] in a mobile home! There were three families; eight people lived in the mobile home. It had two bedrooms.

**Jimena:**

As Hispanics, we try to help each other. Usually, the first step is to go live with someone. There are instances where a lot of people live in the same place. Sometimes they are relatives, sometimes friends, sometimes there are just people you meet, and they [have] asked you to come live with them, so you can afford to make the payments and bills. So everyone will give...their part so they could come up [with] the amount for rent. It's not the best arrangement, and we see people come and are invited to live with someone, but pretty soon they want the person to leave kind of.

**Antonella:**

When we got here to Garden with my husband's cousin, we were all piled up in one place. And we struggled until we found a house that a friend rented us, [mentioned name]. And... [that] was the house where we lived, but we all didn't fit.

**Catalina:**

In Garden City, a family invited us to live here, we came, and we liked it. We were living two or three months with them. And, afterward, my husband got a job, and then we left to rent a house.

**Jazmin:**

Hispanics are very how do I say this...they are helpful towards each other. They will take in as many family members as they can, even if they have to sleep on the ground. They accommodate so that they help each other. I have seen that sometimes a lot of family members have to share an apartment, but that's something they are willing to do. The neighbors across from me have a bunch of cars, and I see all kinds of people there, so I think they have a lot of individuals living there.

**Zoe:**

We didn't move out until last year until my uncle brought his family from Mexico as well. So we gave them our house. So they got that big privilege! Like my mom says, "you did not suffer as much as we did."

Some participants explained how they had to reunite with their family in Finney County under difficult circumstances. Here is a participant, a naturalized U.S citizen, recalling the creative and unlawful measures her family took to get her to the county as an infant.

**Zoe:**

My parents met in Mexico. But my dad was already legal, so he was already living here. So, my mom crossed the border illegally. I crossed with my neighbor's papers. She was five months old as well, so my dad asked his neighbor, "Can I borrow your [five-month-old] daughter's papers so I can cross my daughter over the border?"

To further assess the participants' point of view on how the community members support each other, the participants were asked, "*Do you feel like the community helps each other?*" Many participants stated strongly how family and friends helped each other in various ways. However, few participants were aware of the various opportunities external to family and friends that are available for low-income families in Finney County. Here is an example of a participant's response that was among the most informed about community resources.

**Jazmin:**

Yes, definitely! If I was ever in that position that I needed help, there are a lot of generous people there. For example, my sister's job, there are programs where they provide jackets, bag packs, and shoes for kids that don't have the means to buy that stuff. And I think that is awesome! And I know that they have Emma's house [and] churches willing to help out. The police station and fire station give out free car seats for people that can't afford that. There are a lot of things out there. There is a program that helps veterans who transition from active duty to being in a civilian life that doesn't have income. They are now out of the military, so they have to find a job and transition back to civilian life. I don't remember the program, but they will help with your bills until you get on your two feet.

Among the participants, zero have ever been homeless while living in Finney County; however, as stated above, the majority of the participants lived with extended family members or friends out of necessity. Many explained how their culture and faith play a role in why it is customary to take in the needy. However, a few participants indicated that living with other families eventually became inconvenient to them and burdensome to the host. Here is an example of participant discomfort with such living arrangements.

**Mia:**

Living with people, we weren't comfortable. Because you know that when people live in a very close space... well, it is not comfortable. You aren't comfortable! Because one is waiting for when they can start cooking right? We are always waiting on each other. I tell you ...it's bad!

Several participants stated the important role culture plays in their everyday lives. For example, cultural norms encourage children to live with their parents until they get married. Cultural norms also encourage the inside and at times the outside of houses to be painted in bright colors, and family to frequently meet and socialize weekly in each other homes. Here is a participant explaining the reason behind the bright colors of various housing units in Finney County.

**Zoe:**

Well, for instance, I could speak for Mexicans at least. I know that they like bright colors to be happy and stuff. So that's why we keep our homes tidy and clean and colorful. We just want it to be cheerful, somewhere we can relax and enjoy and have a good time. Since a lot of Mexicans, I know other Hispanics as well spend a lot of time together at home, or at [an] aunt's home, or gram's home, or mom's home. So it is a cultural thing with the bright colors. It's really heartwarming, and you just feel welcome and [it's] just a good vibe. Plus, bright colors are really cheap. It has always been really cheap too.

For the majority of the participants, speaking in English was a difficult task. Table 3 lists the English proficiency level of the participants, of whom 56% were deemed to have poor English proficiency. Practicing language skills matters, immigrants have an incentive to learn English as

they want to succeed in Finney County because of the economic opportunities. Some participants indicated the challenges that they face when trying to navigate life among non-Spanish speakers. A few even stated that trying to speak English among other Hispanic individuals was seen as taking on a form of superiority and therefore discouraged. Here is a participant explaining her frustrations with such expectations.

**Ariana:**

I'm Latina, and sometimes I want to speak English to improve it. There's some that don't speak English, but I too don't speak English very well. But I start speaking English, and they get mad; they say, "Why do you speak English if you are Latina?!" And I always say because I'm practicing.

In addition, one of the major magnets to the area has been job opportunities sought by a majority of the participants. Here is a participant recalling the strong economic incentive to live in the Finney County area.

**Ariana:**

The majority of the people work in Tyson, more Somalis, and Spanish. And you know how much they pay in Tyson? It's good money, yeah, and the people that work there don't need very much help.

However, to gain a better understanding of how well the participants are received in the community, they were asked, "*Have you experienced any racial discrimination in your current neighborhood?*" Overwhelmingly, most (23) of the participants responded that they had not experienced any discrimination. Many gave credit to the fact that the Hispanic community is now a majority ethnic culture, and they don't feel like outsiders. Here is one of the participants explaining her perspective on the matter.

**Fabiana:**

I feel like we're invading the people of this place, and there are fewer Americans. We are the majority!

*Research Question No.2:*

How do rural Hispanic immigrants negotiate their residency status in the US in terms of seeking and obtaining housing?

In order to assess the level of impact the participants' immigration status has had on their efforts to search for and obtain housing, the following interview question asked "In the past, has your immigration status impacted your search for housing?"

The majority of the participants (18) reported that their immigration status had not impacted their search for housing. However, seven of the participants, who at one point lacked legal immigration status while living in Finney County, indicated that their lack of status in the past had been a hindrance to obtaining housing. Here are examples of four of the participants who had struggled to find housing due to their immigration status.

**Jimena:**

Yes, if you don't have perfect documentation you are nobody. There are no rights! Because, since you don't have anything to back you up, it doesn't matter if you work and the desire to continue working, that's not enough for them.

**Catalina:**

Someone else signs for them, cosigner. Just like that they get a relative, a friend to sign for them. And that way sometimes they get a car, insurance, or the bills [paid]. Because for paying bills, a social security [number] is needed to open accounts for water, electricity, and everything else. Yes, they need [the] social security number, it's hard to start because that's the obstacles that prevent people from mobilizing and live a better life. Well this information is confidential you said, right?

**Rebecca:**

*Yes, it is confidential. You will remain anonymous.*

**Constanza:**

Whenever we were looking for housing, everywhere they asked if I had documentation. They would ask for both our documentation. I felt like that is discrimination. My husband was the one renting the place, but they would ask for mine as well. The reason we were able to live in the apartment was because there...

[were] no questions asked about our papers. When looking for a house they pretty much distorted the price they were asking. They were asking for too much.

**Axel:** Oh yeah! 100%. Back then, before 2001, before the towers were hit you can get any house; you can get any loans from the bank. You know if you work and all that. After that happened, the recession came and you could not get a loan from the bank! Even if you have the money, or you could prove you can make the money, you could not get it because of your [undocumented] status.

**Rebecca:** *So, before 911 if you can prove that you were employed but you didn't have papers, you could ask the bank for a loan and they would still back you?*

**Axel:** Back then.

**Rebecca:** *Before 911?*

**Axel:** Yeah. Now you could not. See back then you could; it was easy. They would approve you. You could go to banks...any banks, and yeah.... and now you could not. Even if you had the money, there is nothing you can do.

Some participants indicated the difficulty they had getting a reasonable interest rate to purchase a house due to their lack of documented immigration status. Here is an example.

**Elisa:**

I had issues having legal papers to work or stay in the USA. If you have papers [the bank] asks you 1% or 2% of the cost of the house to get your loan from the bank, but if you don't have legal papers, they ask you [for] 20% down payment. That's a lot of money, and that's one of the barriers we face when we try and ask for credit or buy a house. When you go apply for credit, they go run your credit and find something wrong with your SSN number, or you go present your ITN, and they would say, "These people need a 20% interest rate here." That's the thing! This is not difficult for them to find out what's wrong with your papers.

Nevertheless, the participants did indicate that people in the community would make efforts to help undocumented immigrants attain housing. The help ranged from welcoming them into their homes to live as their guests, documented children helping their undocumented parents, or friends or family taking legal responsibility for the housing unit their undocumented extended family member or friend lived in. For example, here are two participants recalling the scenarios they are aware of.

**Jazmin:**

They can't put the house under their name! Like for example, my father's parents are citizens, and they own their own house. But his uncle and their whole family, they don't have papers or whatever....so their house is put under my father-in-law's name. Either that or where would they live? Probably in a small apartment! And that is a big responsibility to take. That's a house. A second house put under your name. Sort of your credit, you know what I mean? That is really kind of him.

**Zoe:**

No, I don't think so. Not for us, because my dad was legal already. He was a U.S. resident, so I don't think my mom or I ever had that issue with housing since my dad would take charge.

**Rebecca:**

*Have you heard of other immigrants who do not have papers finding it challenging when looking for housing?*

**Zoe:**

If you need to make a deposit, it has to be someone who has a social security number or something. Or a family member that is legal has to put the house under their name or rent the apartment under their name. So I know it's an issue that we have here, because I have friends that have that issue; their rent is under their aunt's name or uncle's, and they have to move house eventually. A lot of families do that; if their kid was born here in America, if they are old enough, a lot of them buy a home for their parents.

However, undocumented immigrants live in fear of deportation. They are constantly fearful of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Here is a participant recalling the time when she was undocumented.

**Lucia:**

Oh, when you don't have papers one can't work. One always has fear because immigration will get you! When ICE comes, one has to escape all the time. That is very cruel!

Moreover, many participants indicated that having any immigration status was a privilege although, being an American citizen was the ultimate privilege. Many stated having legal

immigration status made it easier when trying to buy housing. For example, here is the point of view of a naturalized American citizen who is also a public school teacher.

**Salome:**

...I have been a legal immigrant the whole time, and now I am a citizen. There are certain factors that have helped me a lot, no matter where I have gone I am a legal citizen. I don't ask "Do I put an SSN or not?" I don't think about it; I just do it. When I looked for a place I was able to reject a couple of places because... a) I am a citizen, b) I am college educated, c) we are teachers. The three of us looking for a place we were teachers, and people really like to rent to teachers. So I think I have been favored in a way a lot.

The following information is from a participant who was an undocumented immigrant at one point, but was able to become a naturalized citizen by marrying a legal resident. Here is her point of view on having legal immigration status.

**Catalina:**

Well no, in reality when I got married to my husband, he was a resident and then he became an American citizen. He arranged my papers for me, and after... he fixed my papers for me; I got my citizenship, so my husband and I are citizens. Well, yes, I could see that you get treated better when they know that one is an American citizen. Although it doesn't seem like it sometimes, but legally we have citizenship. We are American citizens, my husband and I.

*Research Question No. 3:*

What are the challenges and opportunities that rural Hispanic immigrants face in terms of being integrated into their local housing community?

In order to capture the housing challenges and opportunities encountered by the participants, the interview focused on several questions. As Table 4 shows, 68% of the participants lived in a trailer at one point in their housing career. Most participants indicated that was not their ideal living environment; however, circumstances dictated the outcome. Some suggested living in a trailer was their only housing option at that point in time, due to financial reasons. Others indicated the speedy and hassle free procedure of acquiring a trailer, compared to



leasing an apartment or a house was the reason; this was convenient especially for the participants who were undocumented immigrants at one point. Others saw buying a trailer as an investment. Here are some examples of participants' responses.

**Salome:**

I see a lot of people, a lot of them live in trailer parks. That's because sometimes if there isn't anything available or they don't have any credit history to get a loan for a house, a trailer is the best option. I do see a lot of that!

**Valentina:**

Yes, a trailer. They don't ask for much to rent it. Well, nothing. Just like six months of living there; then, after six months if you leave you don't get charged for leaving and nothing more. It's the easiest!

**Axel:**

The neighborhood is not that nice. In the beginning it was on Willard ...you know, Kansas Avenue? It was... [at] the end of Kansas Avenue. It was a little trailer, an old trailer. And it was not good. I mean the neighborhood is not that nice. Since it's cheap, everyone could go live there. So you know, there are a lot of people that drink. They don't take care of the look of the trailer, and it's just...I mean it's not a mess...but it's not safe.

**Jazmin:**

Yes, that's where they start off [living in a mobile home]. Because, they are not just throwing money away! Even if it's not a house, even if it's not the best living situation, at least you are not throwing money away. You are investing it, and also it is more spacious, and it's something they could own compared to renting a place that is not... [theirs] legally. They are paying them for nothing! And that's why a lot of people start that way.

Also, it is important to note living in a mobile home during tornado season was a significant safety concern for all participants. Currently, the participants reported that there are no tornado shelters in mobile home parks in Finney County; this means participants have to fend for themselves.

**Montserrat:**

We would like to have a bigger place, and a basement for the tornados.

**Rebecca:** *There are no tornado shelters [at the mobile home park]?*

**Montserrat:**

No, we do not have one. We have to look for shelter somewhere else. Run...run...run...it's been like that all these years.

**Rebecca:** *Have there been any tornado situations in the past?*

**Montserrat:**

Just close things, but nothing really bad. Thank God! It has been fine and quiet I think. Just our surrounding areas, like the nearest town, Dodge City! We had one hit the outside of the town.

**Ariana:**

You have a fear that the trailer will fly away; yeah it's dangerous! When the wind... the wind...when the wind is 60mph, I have to stay inside of the trailer. I feel crazy because of the wind. Like, oh my god! I get up and go to a house, or I go to a basement of an old neighbor or my friends.

**Zoe:**

And I remember when I was little how bad the trailer...the mobile home would move so badly when it was windy. Especially around tornado season, it's terrible! Because since it's made out of, not even steel, just aluminum basically. My mom mostly just wanted a basement [in the current house] since we are so terrorized and afraid of tornadoes. One time the roof almost flew off during. This was in 2002; there was a tornado nearby and the roof almost flew off. That was my dad's last snapping point! We were done! We are moving out! My dad was working at a restaurant as a cook. He was done with it; he was fed up with it. [Father said] "We need a better home for you guys!"

To have a better understanding of how other immigrant groups are perceived in the participants' neighborhood, they were asked, *have you seen other immigrant groups be discriminated against in your neighborhood?* 15 participants answered yes to the question. A notable challenge specified by participants was the discomfort they had in living in close proximity to Somali immigrants. Most attributed this discomfort to fear related to the recent alleged hate crime

attempted in Finney County at an apartment complex in October, 2016 that housed predominantly Somali immigrants. Here is a participant explaining the potential treat and the aftermath that left a lingering fear.

**Jazmin:**

I don't know if you heard about this incident, but there was a group of men who were going to bomb that apartment complex, not mine, but one further down. There were a lot of Somalians; we have a lot of Somalians refugees in this town. So I have seen a lot of discrimination towards them. That's mostly it. Because we have so many of the refugees and that's pretty big to me, wanting to bomb them and the whole complex. That would knock out a lot of people. But that's about it. It['s] scary because that apartment complex is not near mine, but the one I am telling you about, the Labrador one is pretty crappy. They have a lot of Somali tenants there. So I start to think: I live right next to them, what if they want to bomb this one next to me? That could put me in danger. So it's scary!

The interview also addressed how the participants thought the Somali immigrants are perceived in Finney County in general. Here are few participants' responses.

**Fabiana:**

They're not exactly openly discriminated against, no, but the people avoid them! I have seen in the laundry mats, for example, that they are not very welcome, but some of them behave more arrogant and provoke fighting. I believe that's why, but [discrimination is] not [done] very openly. Yes, maybe that's rejection for them.

**Jazmin:**

They say that they smell bad. That they are dirty! I have never smelled anything, but I have experienced interaction with them. I don't think they are bad people because I don't know their culture well enough. I just think that they are very different from us. Like in my apartment complex, there are Somali people that live around me, you know what I mean, so they are really different. One time I was alone, and I think I was washing clothes or washing the dishes, and then there is this Somali lady that literally just opens my front door. No knock, just opens my front door and comes in and says, "Oh! Sorry, I thought this was my friend's apartment" and I am just like what just happened? I feel like do you not knock? Maybe in their culture, that's just how they are. One time, one of them just walked in my garage and was going to go through the garage door connected towards the kitchen, and then I was like "excuse me, who are you?" I was brought up ...like if I don't know you, I will not go into someone's house. I would not barge in like that.

I don't feel like I know them well enough to say that the guy who barged into my apartment is a bad person. I just feel like they are really different. They are really different.

Also, they are really bad drivers. Not all of them. Just whenever I was coming here, one of them reversed ...crazy back and you could really injure people or cause a crash. And [at] one of the apartments, close to the one that was going to be bombed, a lot of them had crashed into actual apartments with their cars. But I don't think that it's a stereotype, but I think it's partly a true one because I don't think they have a lot of access to vehicles in their country. When they come here, they are not that experienced with it. I think they have gotten better since they adapted. So I don't hear them crashing into their complex any more.

**Axel:**

I don't know why they are against them. Like I said, I don't know much about their faith. I respect their faith. Maybe I could invite them to join mine, but if you don't want to it's fine. I respect that! In the beginning, that's why a lot of people wanted to move to the United States because of freedom. Sometimes it's hard to understand why things happen.

Also, other immigrant groups were mentioned as perceived in a negative light. Here are some participants explaining personal biases toward other immigrant groups in their neighborhoods.

**Axel:**

Somalians and Guatemalans are discriminated against. The El Salvadorians talk a lot! You can't go say something to them; they will tell. If they come to the United States, they try to learn English, and they try to LIVE and survive. They get involved with the highest people and they don't stay in the hole all the time. Guatemalans are quieter. They want to hide. The Somalia's don't bother you, but they don't talk to you.

**Catalina:**

The Oaxaquitas [Oaxacan], the ones that come from Guatemala, the ones that come from Haiti, others, yes, we have known that they have been discriminated against.

**Mia:**

Not in my neighborhood, but I do hear often that the Burmese get discriminated against; the Somali are discriminated against a lot.

In general, a majority of the participants felt safe in the area they lived in. However, some neighborhoods were identified to have gang members. In fact, a few participants recalled the

days when gangs were a significant problem where they lived. Even though the level of gang behavior has decreased over the past decade, gangs still have a presence that is felt at times. Here is a participant identifying the area she lived in.

**Zoe**

The trailers by IBP trailers, well across from them! There are other trailers that are in worse condition right now.

**Rebecca**

*How come?*

**Zoe**

It's worse than IBP trailers

**Rebecca**

*People still rent?*

**Zoe**

Yeah, but they are really terrible.

**Rebecca**

*What's terrible about them?*

**Zoe**

The neighborhood, there are a lot of gangs; we know that there [are] a lot of drugs now.

**Rebecca**

*What kind of gangs are there?*

**Zoe**

There is like the Classical Cholo's, the Red and Blue, and the Black and White.

**Rebecca**

*What kind of drugs?*

**Zoe**

I know that there is a lot of Marijuana, cocaine, and meth, and stuff like that.

**Rebecca**

*And people sell them around there?*

**Zoe**

Yeah, they sell a lot of drugs right now.

For deeper insight into the housing experience of Hispanic immigrants in this county regarding housing affordability, the participants were asked, “*Describe your monthly housing cost, as it relates to your current financial situation.*” Several of the participants indicated that they thought housing in Finney County was expensive. As Table 4. shows, 11 participants stated they could not afford their current housing unit. Some mentioned struggling just to make the insurance payment on their houses. Here, a few participants explain their experience.

**Salome:**

Honestly, the reason I am living with my parents is because I can't afford a place of my own. As teachers, we don't make a lot of money, I am still paying off student loans, and I am still paying off my car. For example, when I did live in a separate house, I had roommates, and we could share the rent, I was barely making ends meet with rent and utilities and food. It's difficult! I don't pay rent, but I pay other bills and help in other ways.

**Zoe:**

Oh yes! The housing is expensive, especially the insurance. Because I know insurance is something my parents complain about. Yes, being too high. I know we make payments every month. A good amount because one of my dad's checks always goes into insurance and house payments. So that's pretty high.

**Olivia:**

Right now we are thinking about having our own security system. Cause we just found out it lowers your insurance, your home insurance, so that is a perk.

Next, to assess how informed the participants are regarding community resources available in Finney County, they were asked, “*what housing assistance opportunities are you aware of?*”

Only seven participants stated that they were aware of housing assistance options; the rest had no knowledge of any housing assistance options for low income families or how to gain housing assistance from the government. Here are some examples of very few participants who knew

about community resources pertaining to housing.

**Salome:**

I know there is the HUD program, and I know a lot of ... [landlords] do not accept it. They don't usually! When ...[landlords] post online you will see people commenting right away and say, "do you take HUD?" and then a lot of ...[landlords] would be like, "no, sorry." And a lot of ... [landlords] would put it right on their posting. So that is the problem for people with that type of assistance. I did hear from somebody that rents houses, and she said the problem is that there is no guarantee that ... [landlords] will get paid. Because, for e.g. if [HUD] investigates and they decide to take away their program ... then the landlord does not have a guarantee that the lessee is going to pay [out of pocket]. So that's risky! So that's why some people don't accept that. I don't know of any other programs though.

**Jazmin:**

I know of Emmaus House; they would take in homeless people and [an] organization that helps veterans.

**Jorge:**

Well, it's just rumors I hear from my boss. My old boss! She said that her mother in law lives currently in some apartments where Pizza Hut is close to; I hear that rent is pretty low and that it's pretty nice. I don't know if I would be able to rent it myself.

**Rafaella:**

HUD housing and Section 8 is what I am aware of. Some [units] I know are on Mary and 8th street. They have a lot of section 8 housing. Go down 8th and make a right on Mary. Most of the people from Tyson, employees, most them have settled in those apartment complexes. Further down on Mary, Garden Apple!

In addition, participants were asked a follow up question, "*Have you received any housing assistance from a not for profit organization?*" Only seven participants specified that they had received additional help. Here are participants recalling the time they needed additional assistance.

**Antonella:**

When we got the house, the day we signed was a Friday, and on Monday I didn't have a job anymore because the plant where I worked had burned down. So then the church helped us. From; January to April they paid electricity and gas, and they gave us a check. If one person lost their job, they gave them \$50 for them to get groceries. If both [husband and wife] lost their job when the plant burned down, they gave them \$100 every eight days. For everyone, it was four months of help. They collected an offering in the Kansas-Nebraska Conference and collected close to \$40,000. When the money ran out, then they stopped helping us. It was an offering for us by the Church of Garden.

**Fabiana:**

Hearts of America, they helped me put insulation in the roof. Because my husband was debilitated and my salary ...could not cover it. Then the company that was on Eighth Street, they came and put insulation in the roof. Yes, they did help me, thanks to God!

**Catalina:**

Well yes, when we got here in Garden City, we got here with practically nothing. We did receive help, we received help from the government, and they gave us food stamps. The church also helped us; they gave us some assistance while we got established. Salvation Army, Emmaus House, and others, yes. They gave us food or clothes. When one would come to Garden City, when you come with nothing, yes, there are assistances.

**Rafaella:**

The trailer we were living in burned down, and we lost everything, and the Red Cross was there. Within three days, they helped us get into an apartment. They helped us with the deposit, rent, furniture and new clothes. They helped us a lot! Salvation Army, they helped us with some temporary clothes, but Red Cross also gave us vouchers to buy clothes. When the trailer burned down, that's when I knew we were in the right community. They took collections and canned goods at the local schools, and we were getting calls left and right. People were donating furniture. They took up a collection for me at work. They bought me new uniforms at work.



To clarify the future and current needs of the participants, they were asked, *what kind of action would you like to see from community leaders regarding housing in Finney County, KS?*

The participants' answers ranged from building more homes to addressing the current housing shortage, assisting the undocumented immigrant population with housing, improving the online network for housing search process, and cleaning up the mobile home parks. Here are examples of participants' suggestions.

**Axel:**

The only thing I see, what I would like to see, is to get more help from the leaders. If you live in the mobile home, have it be in good condition or try to have the area clean, so it's ...kept up. That way the value of the area will be good. So you can have a nice place. When you see kids ...if you can live better you can work harder. If you do have kids why should they suffer? If my kids live in a house, why should other kids live in a mobile home? Why, because of the parents, right? So if they live in a decent mobile home or nice park ...if you see the mobile homes west of Garden City it's pretty bad. I feel like it's not fair for the kids because of the parents.

**Salome:**

First, build more! More housing! Build more affordable housing as well. I am a professional, and I have been in my profession for five years, and I can't still afford a good place. Not if you are paying [for] other stuff. If I didn't have loans of any kind, I probably could. I know teachers that started with me they are still single and they have credit card debt. They can't survive without it especially if they have medical issues. So I think that they need more affordable housing for the people who have...who don't have professional jobs because they make even less. It would be difficult. There is a need, a definite need for housing to be built. There have been a few apt buildings that have been built recently, but as soon as you hear about it, you go and ask about it. When they seem about to be finished, and there is already a waiting list. There is a place around campus that I called, and they were like there is a six-month waiting list.

**Jimena:**

So they improve the conditions. Most the apartments when we first come are apartments that are not necessarily livable. The conditions are not good for people, and that's unfortunately what we can afford and what can be rented to us. Because without having ...[documented] status, it's difficult to find a nice place even if you can afford a better place, it's difficult to be able to rent it because [of] the lack of documentation to back you up.

For example, the boys that lived together, that were friends, they could have afforded a better place to live, but because none of them had documents, they could not afford anything else. They could not even go to try to find a better place because of the lack of documentation. Most of the apartments and mobile homes that are for rent, the ones when people first come have to take, are not in very good living condition. There is not much they could do about it. So if the leaders could work on that, on apartments and housing, [to be sure] ...a unit is in livable condition before it's rented that would be useful.

**Constanza:**

There should definitely more help. Immigrants feel scared to speak out because they don't have documentation. So it would be good to reach out and help them.

**Zoe:**

Just inform... the community! Like literally knock on doors. Just give them information on what opportunities are available because I think one of our issues as a Hispanic community is that we are just afraid to get out of our comfort zone. So if the information comes to us, it will help us out a little bit. Inform the community; let them know there are other options for instance for insurance and housing. Ways to pay, I think that would be great.

**Mia:**

My first step is usually to look online. However, in Garden City, it is very difficult to find things online. Because there is not one place where owners or realtors put up a place that they have or something like that. So there are certain retail companies that do offer rentals, and so they would put them on their website, but there ... [are] not very many; you have to know kind of what the realtor is, what the website is. Lately, there is a Facebook group where people would sometimes post information if they have something coming up or somebody sees a house or an apartment is ... for rent.

**Elisa:**

So that immigrant people have better opportunities, like everyone else. Like to have credit from the bank, have fair solutions for income. So they can treat us just like people, like everybody else. If you work, if you have a way to pay, you have good credit, you should get a house. [It should not be based on]... your color, or origin, or your social status ...whether legal or not legal...I don't know.

**Jazmin:**

For sure we need more homes to be built. Housing prices are extremely expensive right now. I think it's because of so many people moving into this town. Its

expansion.... there is not that ... [much] housing. There need to be more apartment units so it can make the prices lower obviously. More competition...I think more houses could be made because it's hard to find affordable house here. Even the tiny ones are super expensive.

### **Presenting Themes**

The following section will present the four overarching themes: strong dependence on social networks, efforts to protect the undocumented immigrants, fear of living next to Somalian immigrants and the perils of lack of information. The themes identified in this study capture the housing experience of Hispanic immigrants in Finney County through the participants interviewed.

#### *Theme 1: Strong dependence on social networks*

Throughout the study, it was evident how vital social networks were to the participants. Social networks constitute extended family members, friends, mere acquaintances, and organizations that are significant to the community, such as churches. The concept of family, among the participants, extended far beyond the nuclear family; it included aunts, uncles, 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> cousins, and grandparents. When discussing family, the participants' sense of obligation and commitment was palpable in the interviews.

Moreover, the majority of the participants had been notably helped by their social networks. Upon arrival to Finney, 20 participants lived with extended family members until they were able to stand on their own two feet. As they were welcomed by someone else, the desire to pay it forward to other newcomers who might also be in need of the same type of assistance was evident among most of the participants. The participants attributed their willingness to help families in need to their culture.

In addition, dependence on social networks was also vital in the search to access housing. Participants heavily relied on word of mouth from their social networks to find their

first housing unit. However, as they lived longer in Finney County, their strong reliance on social networks to find housing decreased overtime.

*Theme 2: Efforts to protect the undocumented immigrants*

About 15 participants indicated that they lived in a mixed status family. Therefore, they had one or more of their extended family members lack legal immigration status. In addition, the majority of the participants knew of someone in their social networks who was undocumented, and therefore they could discuss how such people navigated life in Finney County.

It was apparent, from the accounts given by the participants that life for undocumented immigrants is challenging in Finney County. However, the people in the community make significant strides to come to the aid of undocumented immigrants. For example, buying a house or renting an apartment is quite difficult or near impossible if one does not have legal status. Therefore, when undocumented immigrants in Finney encounter such barriers, they rely on their social networks for assistance. The undocumented immigrant usually has two choices, find a family who will take them in to live with them or find someone from their social networks who will take legal responsibility for the housing unit they will live in. At times, this could be a challenging task since signing for a house but having other families live in it is not accepted by a lot of landlords in Finney. Therefore, discretion is used by the agreeing parties on the arrangement. The undocumented immigrant will pay all the bills, but the deed or the lease is under the extended family member who is documented.

In addition, the undocumented immigrants live in fear of getting deported by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Surveil tactics range from taking precautions while living their daily lives to relaying on social networks or radio announcements to know if ICE is

conducting raids in Finney. In general, the support for undocumented immigrants is strong; most of the participants are in favor of immigration reform.

*Theme 3: Fear of living next to Somalian immigrants.*

The Hispanic immigrants in Finney have been around long enough to become a majority, whereas one of the more recent immigrant groups in town are the Somalian immigrants who are mainly known by the participants to practice the Muslim faith, have different traditional customs, and wear a Jilbab, or traditional attire. The contrasts between the Hispanic culture and the Somalian culture are noticeable; however, the participants in this study did not appear to be well-informed about Somalian culture or country.

Therefore, the participants stated numerous negative perceptions and misconceptions about the Somalian immigrants in the interviews. Some raised their resentment about the Somalians' ability to qualify for refugee status. The automatic work permit the status allows them to receive is ideal for immigrants. The participants see gaining refugee status as a privilege handed to some and denied to them; specifically, the Somalian immigrants granted refugee status would not have to fret about ever becoming undocumented or spend years waiting to receive work authorization.

However, the recent alleged terror plot targeting the apartment complex that predominantly housed Somalian immigrants in October 2016 has left many weary in Finney. Most participants in this study were anxious about Somalian immigrants potentially being victims of hate crimes, and that living next to them would lead themselves and their families to become collateral damage. The participants make a logical argument of a real possibility. Nonetheless, this fear has consequences that would affect the housing search process for the

Hispanic immigrants in this study; participant could start avoiding to live in areas that are occupied predominately by Somalian immigrants.

*Theme 4: The perils of lack of information*

As noted in the demographic section presented in Table 3, nine of the participants had less than a 9<sup>th</sup> grade education, while 16 were high school graduates. Moreover, only three participants have a college degree, while three are currently college students. However, education is vital for the types of jobs the participant applies in this community, which in turn affects the level of income they receive, which then determines what kind of housing unit they can potentially afford.

Moreover, it was evident that many participants were poorly informed about community resources. More importantly, the low-income participants, the ones who could benefit from various community resources, were barely aware of organizations they could reach out to for assistance. Becoming more informed and reaching out for additional assistance could potentially reduce their financial burden.

At times, participants have noted how little they themselves pay attention when signing housing and insurance contracts. Thus, not knowing the difference between a fixed interest rate and floating interest rate has caused some participants to financially suffer. Also, not fully reading and understanding apartment leases has caused a few participants to lose their deposit when moving out. In addition, if they have poor English proficiency, that also becomes a hindrance to becoming fully informed. One participant also explained that older immigrants tend to stick with what they are accustomed to instead of being proactive and researching new possibilities, for example, buying insurance.

## **Chapter Summary**

This chapter evaluated the data set to explore the cultural experiences of Hispanic immigrants in Finney County, mainly in regards to their being integrated into the local housing community. The housing career of the immigrants was modeled in line with the housing career framework demonstrated in Chapter Two. Next, the data analysis strategy was thoroughly explained as a path detailing how codes were made into categories and then into themes. The four resultant, overarching themes identified in this study were as follows: strong dependence on social networks, efforts to protect the undocumented immigrants, fear of living next to Somalian immigrants, and the perils of lack of information.

## Chapter 5 – Discussion, Implication for Practice, & Future Research

This chapter discusses findings of this study regarding the housing experience of Hispanic immigrants in Finney County. It offers implications for practice and then lists recommendations for future research.

The purpose of this study was to explore the cultural experiences of Hispanic immigrants in a rural US community regarding integration into the local housing community. Three main research questions guided this study: *What are Hispanic immigrants' experiences of being integrated into a rural US community in Kansas? How do rural Hispanic immigrants negotiate their residency status in the US in terms of seeking and obtaining housing? What are the challenges and opportunities that rural Hispanic immigrants face in terms of being integrated into their local housing community?*

Finney County has been experiencing a housing shortage since the first influx of immigrants a little less than four decades ago when meatpacking plants such as IBP and ConAgra started providing economic opportunities. Over the years, very few rental units have been built, and keeping up with the yearly housing demands has been impossible for the community. Therefore, mobile home parks and run-down motels on the outskirts of the city limits have become practical housing selections for immigrants who lack the means or social connections for a more desirable living space (Stull, 2011).

Moreover, with business growing in Garden City, KS, the population is expected to rise in the coming years, which would further burden an already stressed housing market. Even though efforts have been made over the years by community leaders and developers to try to address the housing shortage, the community needs a broader, more robust housing plan.



The participants in this study included 20 women and five males of Hispanic origin. The majority of the participants were from Chihuahua and Zacatecas, Mexico; however, some were from other Hispanic countries such as The Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, or Honduras. Data for this study were collected using in-depth interviews with participants being given an option of having the interview in Spanish or English. The Spanish interviews were conducted by two Spanish-speaking interviewers, and later those interviews were transcribed and translated by a trained interpreter.

Next, the data set was objectively and systematically analyzed using a qualitative research software, NVivo. Initial coding was used for the first coding cycle, and pattern coding was used for the second cycle coding. Then, four overarching themes were identified.

### **Study Limitations**

This study has few limitations that may have a potential impact; therefore it is important to address them. From 25 of the participants, 14 had preferred to conduct their interviews in Spanish. As previously stated, Spanish is a Romance language while English is a Germanic language. Consequently, various differences exist between the two languages, and translating word to word was challenging at times. Regarding sampling, snowball and convenience sampling do not draw from randomly generated samples; therefore they are expected to be biased, and generalizing to a broader population would not be possible.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The four overarching themes identified in chapter four, namely strong dependence on social networks, efforts to protect the undocumented immigrant, fear of living next to Somalian immigrants, and the perils of lack of information, have helped answer the research questions presented in chapter one. In support of that claim, the following section presents findings on

nine facets of immigrant life related to housing and community, provides discussion, and links it back to the literature.

### *Culture, Family, and Social Networks*

This study found that 76% of the participants had to live with extended family or friends upon arrival in Finney County, almost all in crowded conditions. Extended family included grandparents, aunts, uncles, and first to third cousins. Many attributed settling for such accommodations to financial limitations, and others stated housing shortage. The participants emphasized the important role culture, extended family, and their social networks play into integration into the community. Moreover, many attributed the willingness of families to take in the needy to cultural norms. Notably, the only time the participants indicated living in crowded conditions was on arrival, and only one participant indicated continuing to live in crowded housing. Furthermore, zero of the participants have ever been homeless. Many indicated having been in dire financial straits and could not have afforded housing at one point in their housing career, but they never found themselves homeless due to the community members who were willing to help.

The above findings were mostly consistent with the findings in the literature. The Hispanic culture is deeply rooted in collectivism. Immigrants who come from collectivistic societies are accustomed to putting the need of the group over the need of the individual (Greif, 1994; Alaniz & Gilly, 1986). Therefore living with extended family is common. It is also customary for Mexican and Central American children to live with their parents until they get married (Alaniz & Gilly, 1986; Hernandez, 1996). Therefore, Hispanic households experience more crowding than most ethnic groups (Burr, Mutchler, & Gerst, 2010). The findings changed

when 96% of the participants indicated not living in crowded conditions once they were established.

### *Language Barriers*

This study found that for the majority of the participants, speaking in English was challenging; in fact, 56% of the participants had poor English proficiency. However, language skills mattered to most participants, and they indicated a desire to improve their English proficiency to gain better economic opportunities. Some expressed their frustration with other Hispanic immigrants who discourage speaking in English among Spanish-speaking folks, suggesting that it was elitist. Also, other barriers came from lack of English proficiency such as failure to capitalize on various community resources; it also led to participants signing housing contracts they could not understand, for example, understanding the difference between a floating and fixed interest rate and the concept of penalties for breaking leases. The result of such barriers was often lead to deep financial debts.

The finding regarding language barriers is consistent with findings in the literature. Language assimilation is an important indicator of an immigrant's ability to improve housing circumstances. If an immigrant is well versed in the host country's language, successfully negotiating housing accommodation regarding rental or mortgage interest rates would be more likely. However, a lack of basic language skills would be challenging to the immigrant household (Alba & Nee, 2002; Murdie, 2002).

### *Poverty and Poor Education*

The study found after comparing the participants' monthly household income and factoring household size that 12 participants fell below the national poverty line provided by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. Also, nine of the participants had less than a

9th-grade education, while 16 were high school graduates. Financial constraints and poor education have disadvantages for immigrants when they are trying to integrate into a community successfully (Murdie, 2002; Saenz, 2008)

The above findings were consistent with those of previous studies. The rural Hispanic population has a propensity to be faced with economic and social hindrances that stem from high rates of poverty and lower education (Saenz, 2008).

#### *Lack of Information*

This study found that the majority of participants (18) were not aware of local housing assistance programs such as public housing, USDA Rental Assistance, HUD rental assistance, Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers, project-based Section 8 contracts, supportive housing for the elderly, supportive housing for the disabled, and the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program. Of the seven participants who had burdened households, only two were aware of one of the housing assistance options. Therefore, if participants do not have the knowledge of how to gain financial and housing assistance when they are eligible, it might be a challenge to rise above their economic woes.

Again, immigrants being susceptible to inadequate information about community resources is consistent with the findings of previous studies. This could be attributed to various reasons: language limitation, poor education, and limited familiarity with host country customs (Biterman, 1993; Murdie 2002)

#### *Housing Affordability*

This study found that 11 participants could not afford their housing unit, while 14 indicated that they could. However, of the 14 who could, three had a housing cost burden ratio above 30%. Overall, seven participants had a housing-cost burden ratio over 30%. Moreover,

several other participants' indicted housing in Finney County is generally expensive; housing insurance payments was often mentioned as one of the challenges.

Previous studies of housing careers of immigrants have recounted the significant obstacles immigrants experience regarding housing affordability; therefore, the findings were consistent (Cutler, Glaeser, & Vigdor, 2008; Murdie, 2003; Kendig, 1984).

#### *Housing Shortage and Housing Search Process*

Many participants noted that they struggled to find housing in Finney County with some reporting a search of several months; the average longest search time was 8.2 months. This was a significant obstacle for the participants; most had to resort to living with family members and patiently wait for a housing unit to become available, at times being on the waiting list for many months. Also, the participants stated that their housing search was heavily reliant on word of mouth from friends and family, reflecting a clear dependence on their social network. However, the participants also indicated that the longer they lived in Finney, the less reliant they became on their social networks for housing as they resorted to traditional methods such as looking up ads online, contacting rental properties, or finding ads in newspapers.

This finding was consistent with that of previous studies, which correlates with conventional views of assimilation theory that suggest that an immigrant's length of stay in a host country permits the person to become educated about the local housing market, increase income, and as a result lead to an advantageous housing circumstance (Krivo, 1995; Brojas, 2002).

#### *Discrimination*

This study found that overwhelming numbers of participants (92%) have not experienced any discrimination in their neighborhoods or around Finney County. However, 60% reported

having witnessed other immigrant groups be discriminated against, mainly Somalians, and some indicated seeing Burmese, Guatemalans, and Mexicans from Oaxaca State being treated unfairly. This was an interesting find since many participants indicated that the reason they were shielded from such discrimination was because the Hispanic immigrant groups were a majority in Finney County. Therefore, the newer immigrants that are now the minority likely were being subjected to the scrutiny historically reserved for new immigrant groups integrating into a community. Furthermore, the participants indicated their concerns about living near Somalians due to the fear that those immigrants would continue to be targets of hate crimes, possibly affecting Hispanic and other people living around them.

This finding adds new information to what earlier studies have documented. Certainly, past studies have reported notable discrimination struggles and segregation that immigrant groups encountered throughout their integration process (Cutler, Glaeser, & Vigdor, 2008; Murdie, 2003). However, the concern Hispanic immigrants in this study have with living next to Somali immigrants is a newer phenomenon, and one not yet explored in previous housing studies.

### *Undocumented Immigrants*

The participants who were undocumented immigrants at one point in their housing search discussed the hardship they faced due to their undocumented immigration status. Furthermore, they were in constant fear of deportation and potentially being separated from their families. However, they heavily relied on their social networks and on radio announcements to be able to avoid Immigration and Customs Enforcement when government agents were spotted in Finney County.

Nonetheless, the participants did specify that people in the community make significant efforts to help undocumented immigrants attain housing. Assistance came in the form of welcoming those immigrants into their homes, documented children helping their undocumented parents gain a house or a car, or friends or family taking legal responsibility for the housing unit their undocumented extended family member or friend lived in. All such actions are efforts to protect the undocumented immigrants.

The findings are consistent with previous research findings that undocumented immigrants may face significant struggle due to their immigration status (Saiz, Albert, 2007; Chavez, 2012). However, the findings regarding documented immigrants taking legal responsibility for housing units resided in by undocumented immigrants, potentially putting themselves in a risky financial situation, is not a widely explored concept in previous housing studies.

#### *Living in a Trailer*

Most participants indicated that living in a trailer was not the ideal housing or living environment. However, it was their only housing option at one point in their housing career. This was mainly due to financial constraints or lacking legal immigration status to buy or rent a better type of housing. Others specified the process required to obtain a trailer was quick and hassle free and therefore convenient. More importantly, it was a very useful option for undocumented immigrants since it rarely requires immigration paper work. Naturally, living in a trailer in a mobile home park during tornado season was a significant safety concern for all participants. Most trailers and trailer parks had no tornado shelter nearby, so the participants and their children lived in constant fear during tornado season.

The findings on immigrants living in mobile home parks and rundown motels were mostly consistent with those from previous studies and news reports (Broadway & Stull, 2006; Stull, 2011; Lowe, 2013). Moreover, low socioeconomic status of an immigrant is a noted obstacle to successful assimilation and decreases the chance for desired housing (Borjas, 1999; Borjas 2002). However, the finding of the effects tornado season has on immigrant families living in mobile home parks has not been discussed widely.

### **Implications for Practice**

One of the key contributions of this research to housing studies is findings from its particular focus on Hispanic immigrants in rural America. Currently, research about immigrants in rural regions is especially limited. The study was designed using the housing career framework by Murdie (2002) to further explore the many factors that could potentially influence the housing career of the Hispanic immigrant in Finney County. With the growing trend of immigrants moving to rural regions, this research aims to encourage another researcher to explore the housing experience of immigrant groups in rural regions.

This study has shed light on the strong need for building more housing units in Finney County. The lack of affordable housing options in this county, as demonstrated in this study, has impacted participants' integration into the community. Lack of affordable housing options encourages crowding, and immigrants are resorting to living in dilapidated mobile home parks. Thus, this study highlights several areas where Community Planners and policy makers could contribute to improving immigrants' lives.

For example, mobile home parks in Finney County currently do not have tornado shelters. Clearly, policy in the county should be proactive in this regard and approve adequate tornado shelters for all the mobile home communities. However, this research goes further and



encourages policy makers to consider making this law. If a mobile home park, some on the outskirts of the city, has hundreds of people living in there, the owners should be required to provide tornado shelters. Of course, subjecting mobile home park owners to this law could potentially lead them to raise rent on an already financially constrained group; therefore, the city should provide some form of subsidy. Moreover, mobile home parks have been expanding in Finney County, justifying the need for adequate shelter even more. Almost all of the participants indicated that living in a trailer was never the ideal option for them and said if given an opportunity they would prefer a better living arrangement. Therefore, expanding mobile home parks should be discouraged in favor of building affordable housing units.

The participants in this study have clarified the hardship undocumented immigrants face in attaining housing. However, the community in Finney County make notable efforts to protect undocumented immigrants, and at times documented individuals place themselves in financially risky positions trying to assist undocumented immigrants. For instance, documented individuals being responsible for more than one mortgage or rental unit is a significant financial burden to take on. If the undocumented immigrant loses a job or is deported, the Good Samaritan is left with an enormous financial responsibility such that defaulting could ruin their credit score and future ability to attain housing.

Comprehensive immigration reform would not only be beneficial to the undocumented immigrants living in the shadows but also to the documented family members and friends who take responsibility for them. The stigma of being undocumented is real, but also true that many undocumented families in America live in financial hardship and fear of being separated from each other. There should be some form of penalty for breaking the law of the land, but letting undocumented parents and their children live the rest of their days in fear is a bridge too far.

Congress should not fail at solving this humanitarian problem since immigration reform is vital to many families. Lastly, comprehensive immigration reform should not be used only to drum up votes every four years as empty promises have consequences for families across America.

As for other ethnic groups in this region, Somalians are among the newer immigrants to Finney County who need help with assimilation. Having cultural awareness events to introduce more of their culture to the community could be beneficial in bridging the division between the Hispanic community and the Somali community. More interaction among different immigrant groups could promote more understanding of customs and culture and therefore less fear and discrimination.

Lastly, this study recognizes the strong need to provide educational and informational sessions or open forum regarding community resources specifically targeting immigrant groups. Also, in some cases, going door to door might be necessary to educate immigrants about community resources and so improve their lives.

### **Future Research**

This study raises several opportunities for further research. In regards to perception, this study sheds light on the interesting dynamic between the Hispanic immigrant group and the Somali immigrant group prompting research of the housing experience of Somali immigrants in Finney County. Evidently the Somali immigrants had a noteworthy impact on the Hispanic immigrants in this study, so assessing their housing experience would provide a fuller picture. Moreover, southwest Kansas in general has become a magnet for immigrants over the years. Therefore, a study that assesses the housing experience of Hispanic and Somali immigrants in Ford, Grant, and Seward counties could provide a useful comparison.

Ultimately, to fully investigate the barriers to housing development and understand the local housing market in Finney County, a study incorporating the point of view of key players in the community regarding the current housing challenges would be pertinent. Interviews with elected officials, real estate professionals, housing developers, government staff, educators, religious organization, NGO'S, and planners could shed light on the matter and provide recommendations on how to solve community issues.

The following are research questions inspired by the results of this study:

- ❖ What are the challenges of taking legal responsibility for homes or cars owned by undocumented immigrants?
- ❖ What are Somalian immigrants' experiences of being integrated into a rural US community in Kansas?
- ❖ How are documented children impacted in Finney by having undocumented parents?
- ❖ What is the experience of the Somalian immigrant group with discrimination in Finney?
- ❖ What are the effects for Somalian immigrants of becoming a target of hate crime in Finney? What actions should be taken to mitigate the threats?
- ❖ What are the challenges and opportunities that rural Somalian immigrants face in terms of being integrated into their local housing community?
- ❖ Would Somalian prefer to live in a housing unit designed to take into account their customs? If so, what are the needs?
- ❖ How does the Somalian immigrant's social network differ from the Hispanic immigrant's social network?
- ❖ What kind of impact do the Somalian immigrant religious practices have on their integration into the community?

## **Conclusion**

This chapter discussed findings regarding the housing experience of Hispanic immigrants in Finney County. Mainly due to lack of adequate and affordable housing, immigrants find themselves living with extended family, friends, or in a run-down trailer when they can't attain desired housing units; further emphasizing the need for building additional housing units. The strong dependence on the social network was evident throughout the study. Moreover, the efforts to protect undocumented immigrants in Finney was apparent. Documented family members or friends taking legal responsibility for housing units that undocumented immigrants live in is a notable financial risk. Furthermore, the concern Hispanic immigrants in this study have about living next to Somalis is noteworthy and may impact long term housing choice patterns. Lastly, lack of information among immigrants regarding community resources should be addressed by aggressively reaching out to the immigrant community to educate and inform them. This study has found that the mission of community planning has to be a multifaceted process, and immigrant families have several needs that should be addressed in Finney County. Community planners and policy makers could play a vital role in facilitating many changes for the immigrant community, consequently improving their lives.

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## **Appendix A- Phone/E-mail Solicitation**

Dear [name],

I am writing to ask for your participation in a study aimed at evaluating the Hispanic immigrant housing experience in Finney County, KS. The requirements are that you be a Hispanic immigrant, that you moved to Finney County, KS between 1996 and 2012, which you have made at least two moves, that you have lived in a rental unit at least once, and that you are at least 18 years of age. Your participation is completely voluntary and will include one meeting where you are asked about your housing experiences. All meetings will be held on the campus of Garden City Community College or AmericInn Lodge & Suites conference room. If you qualify and agree to participate in a one hour interview, you will receive \$10 for your participation. If you are interested in participating, please contact Erebecca Berhanemeskel by replying to this e-mail or by phone at 620-###-####.

Regards,

Erebecca Berhanemeskel

## **Appendix B- Consent Form**

**PROJECT TITLE:** The Housing Experience of Hispanic Immigrants in Rural America

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:** John W. Keller

**CO-INVESTIGATOR(S):** Erebecca Berhanemeskel

**CONTACT NAME AND PHONE FOR ANY PROBLEMS/QUESTIONS:** Erebecca

Berhanemeskel berhane@ksu.edu

**IRB CHAIR CONTACT/PHONE INFORMATION:** *(This information is for the subject in case he/she has questions, or needs or wants to discuss any aspect of the research with an official of the university or the IRB)*

- Rick Scheidt, Chair, Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, (785) 532-3224.
- Jerry Jaax, Associate Vice President for Research Compliance and University Veterinarian, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, (785) 532-3224.

**SPONSOR OF PROJECT:** Private funding

**PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH:** This study aims to identify the typical housing experience of immigrants in Finney County, KS. The study will focus on immigrants who have established their lives in Finney County, KS from 1996-2012. The study will focus on the internal and external elements that contribute to their immigrant housing experience.

**PROCEDURES OR METHODS TO BE USED:** There will be a set of interview questions to answer and audio recording. Each participant will receive \$10 compensation for participation.

**LENGTH OF STUDY:** One hour

**RISKS OR DISCOMFORTS ANTICIPATED:** No known risk.

**BENEFITS ANTICIPATED:** Local official will have information on how to better address immigrant housing needs.

**EXTENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY:** Confidentiality will be maintained, and aliases will be assigned for all participants in the study. All data and information gathered will be stored in a password protected workstation, and devices will be housed in a locked cabinet.

**TERMS OF PARTICIPATION:** I understand this project is research, and that my participation is completely voluntary. I also understand that if I decide to participate in this study, I may withdraw my consent at any time, and stop participating at any time without explanation, penalty, or loss of benefits, or academic standing to which I may otherwise be entitled.

I verify that my signature below indicates that I have read and understand this consent form, and willingly agree to participate in this study under the terms described, and that my signature acknowledges that I have received a signed and dated copy of this consent form.

**Participant**

**Name:**

**Participant**

**Date**

**Signature:**

**Witness to Signature:**

**Date**

**(project staff)**

### **Appendix C- Subjectivity Statement**

Pursuing a degree in Environmental Design and Planning is my opportunity to address my long-held concerns regarding environmental degradation, economic deprivation, unsustainable growth, and underrepresented communities one sees in many forgotten corners throughout the world. Being born and raised in Ethiopia has given me a humble perspective on life but also a sense of urgency to be an agent of change for underrepresented communities. Witnessing unimaginable levels of poverty and unmatched despair awoke something inside of me, and I knew I could never be a silent bystander in this world. When I turned 14, I convinced my parents to ship me off to boarding school in America; as a young lady, I knew my odds of success would significantly increase in the land of opportunity.

As an immigrant living in rural towns in Kansas for over a decade, I witnessed incoming immigrants facing numerous questions derived from fear, doubt, and uncertainty. Nonetheless, regardless of public opinion, I believe a basic physiological need, such as shelter, should be a fundamental human right. Therefore, my desire to be a significant contributor to improvement for overlooked communities was the catalyst that aided me to pursue my current research: The Housing Experience of Hispanic Immigrants in Rural America.

Lastly, when I see a hard working immigrant family from a collectivist culture, I feel a kindred spirit. I can relate to the sacrifices they may have made to attain the American dream, and also the struggle they might have faced adapting to American culture. My connection to the immigrant community as a whole was my inspiration for this study.

### Appendix D- Code Definition

<b>Depending on Social &amp; Community Networks</b>	
"Being a burden"	The feeling of weighing down others
Community engagement	Process of working with community
Depending on friends & family	Social support systems
Government assistance	Benefits & financial assistance from the government
Helping parents	Providing any support to parents
Living with others	Living in a housing unit not personally owned or rented
NGO aid	Non-governmental organization assistance
<b>Hindrance to Upward Mobility</b>	
"I don't pay attention"	To ignore informative information
Lack of English	Minimal English language proficiency
Living paycheck-to-paycheck	Financially restricted, paycheck mainly devoted to expenses
Low credit	High credit risk
Low income	Low-wage and lack of savings
"Some immigrants struggle"	The challenges immigrants face while integrating
Poor education	Limited formal education
<b>Community Need</b>	
Build more homes	Plea to increase housing supply
Collective housing options	Members share housing expenses and work load
Immigration reform	Changing the current immigration laws
"Knock on doors to inform us"	Personalized efforts by community outreach programs
Loan to undocumented	Lending to immigrants without documentations
Online networks for housing	Social media & websites that provide housing information
Rent to undocumented	Renting housing units to undocumented immigrants
Tornado shelters for trailers	City providing tornado shelters for trailer parks
<b>Constraints that Led to Living in a Trailer</b>	
Living with others	Not wanting to live with others
"No papers, few options"	Minimal opportunity due to immigration status
Not throwing away money"	Investment strategy
"Nowhere to move to"	Failure to find a housing unit
Only option for shelter	Only housing option available

Quick Find	Efficient housing search conclusion
<b>Cultural Influences</b>	
Cultural norms	Standards set by social groups
Family structure	Extended family included in nuclear family
Opening home to the needy	Extending hospitality when housing is needed
Relying on faith	Complete trust in divine interventions
"Staying humble"	Living modestly till tides turn for the better
<b>Safety Concerns</b>	
Drugs & Gangs	Sinister activity connected to drugs and gangs
Fearing ICE	Apprehension due to ICE crack downs
Seeking shelter for safety	Immediate desire to obtain shelter due to fear
"Some bad people"	Negatively perceived individuals
"Tornado season panic"	Fear during Tornado season in Kansas
<b>Privilege</b>	
Advantage of being American citizen	Perks for immigrants gaining citizenship
Being a majority	Hispanics are a majority in Finney
Being in the service	Serving in the military opens up doors
Status is privilege	Having an immigration status is beneficial
"Unfair for people waiting"	Advocating for immigrants that follow immigration laws
<b>Protecting the Undocumented</b>	
Housing under another name	Unlawfully signing contracts to aid undocumented immigrants
"Hope"	A feeling of expectation that immigration reform will prevail
Impact of lack of status	How lack of documentation hinders daily life
Mixed status families	Families with documented and undocumented members
"Silenced"	Having no voice in social and political issues
<b>Dissatisfaction with Housing</b>	
Buyer's Remorse	The regret felt after purchasing a housing unit
Difficulty with loans	Challenges faced when seeking loan assistance
"Housing is expensive"	The feeling of not being able to afford a housing unit
Housing shortage	Deficiency in the number of housing units needed
"Insurance is expensive"	The feeling of not being able to afford insurance

"Need for privacy"	The state of being free from disturbance
Poor housing conditions	Inadequate housing
Slow service from landlord	Landlord not meeting expected response time
<b>Satisfaction with Housing</b>	
Feeling Protected	The acknowledgment of feeling safe
Clean environment	Outside housing unit is in good conditions
Children playing freely	Community playgrounds or safety zones
Comfort	All needs and wants met
Flexible landlords	Landlords that accommodate different housing needs
Little effort to search	Efficient and satisfying housing search conclusion
Outdoors	Backyards or community playgrounds
<b>Negative Perceptions of other immigrants</b>	
Living next to Somalians	The challenges of living next to Somalians
"Struggle to fit in"	Standing out among colleague and classmates
"They are a target of hate crime"	Somalians are the new targets of hate crimes
"They can't drive"	Somalians stated as lacking driving skills
"They have a lot of better opportunity than us"	Perception of opportunities for Somalians
"They smell"	Somalians stated to have odor issues
<b>Pull &amp; Push Factors</b>	
Drug Cartel's	Living in towns known for drug trafficking operations
Good job's in Garden	Job opportunities with livable wages
Lack of economic opportunity	Lack of job opportunities with livable wages
Rejoin family	Reuniting with family members
"They have seen worse"	Working in Finney in poor conditions, better than working in poor conditions in the home country
Violence at home	Safety concerns involving physical force